

# THE GRAMOPHONE

London Office:  
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London, W.1.

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Vol. III.

NOVEMBER, 1925

No. 6

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## WHERE WE STAND

*By THE EDITOR*

I AM not sorry that various considerations have made it necessary to hold my tongue about the little "gadget" to which I referred in the April number of THE GRAMOPHONE, because it has enabled me to write about it in conjunction with the new instrument which His Master's Voice will have presented for the approval of the public by the time these words are printed.

Last spring the Rev. L. D. Griffith, Rector of Silvington, wrote to me to say that he had discovered a device which had greatly improved the tone of his gramophone and for which he had applied for a patent. Would I advise him what to do with it? Now many people write to me in that strain, and I had begun to think that the spring of my hope is growing a little weak under the demands that are made upon it. However, I asked him to let me try his invention if it was not too bulky for transport. In due course came a letter to say that he had sent it to me. I summoned all hands to the beach to help land the device when the boat arrived that morning, but the precaution turned out to be unnecessary, because the device was small enough to be carried in a waistcoat pocket. In fact, it was nothing but a little piece of indiarubber tubing apparently cut

off a garden hose and enclosed in two curtain rings. I felt a little discouraged, for it did not look as if it would improve a broken teapot, much less a gramophone. I turned my attention to the directions for use that accompanied it and read that Mr. Griffith's theory was that the reproduction of recorded music was immensely improved by a flexible tone-arm. My Peridulce is the easiest machine for this kind of experiment, and on the Peridulce my first experiment was made. But, from the record's point of view, just how much flexibility was desirable? I looked round for a record to spoil, and I had no hesitation in choosing—no, let charity stay my pen. I harnessed the sound-box to the tone-arm with the tube as directed and not only could not perceive the slightest improvement, but actually fancied a definite inferiority. I tried again by adjusting the curtain rings to achieve the miracle that Mr. Griffith had promised. It was no good. I tried it on the H.M.V. horizontal grand. Worse. I tried it on the Balmain. No good at all. The Orchorsol does not lend herself to these experiments. I tried the Jewel Portable. This time I fancied that there was a slight improvement, but not enough to bother about. In the end I decided that here was

another case of auto-hypnotism, produced this time by life in a solitary country parish. Then the next morning two more tubes arrived, more workmanlike affairs, which Mr. Griffith recommended as much better than his own hand-made article. I took the same bad record and tried it on the Peridulce again. The improvement was astonishing. I tried the H.M.V. horizontal grand, but the tube did not fit the gooseneck tone-arm well and, though there was a distinct improvement, it was nothing really remarkable. Then I tried the Balmain with the No. 2 sound-box, and it was a clear case of "Eureka!" I had no longer the least hesitation about using my best records, and I opened with the H.M.V. *Entry of the Gods*. This was really marvellous. Never before had the cymbals clashed or the timpani rolled so realistically. I went on through record after record, orchestras, bands, sopranos, violins, pianos, chamber music, and in no case was the experiment anything but remarkable. So far as I could make out, the flexibility gave a genuine mellowness, not the meretricious mellowness of a composition diaphragm; it did not diminish, but it certainly sweetened the scratch; it helped definition; and it produced *increased* resonance. I could not believe the last for a long time, but I satisfied myself by experiments of listening in remote rooms through closed doors that there was increased resonance. With a Columbia No. 7 on the Peridulce I had splendid results; but the H.M.V. horizontal was obstinate, and I failed to effect the same improvement there. With regard to records, those that benefited most were Columbias, both old and new. In fact at this moment I am positive that the finest performances of Columbia records can be heard at Jethou. The records which benefited next were Vocalions, Parlophones, and the older H.M.V.'s. The newer H.M.V.'s (I don't mean the very newest recordings; I shall come to them presently) were much improved, but not to the same extent.

What to do next? In my excitement I could not resist hinting at my happy combination, and I was rather taken aback (as well as considerably moved for more personal reasons) to find that half the readers of my paper were prepared to go nap on the announcement. The sale of records fell off through fear of a new process, the sale of instruments was more static than it should have been, and altogether it was essential to quieten people down, because, after all, it was only a rubber tube, and I was not yet convinced of its general applicability. Moreover there was the question of the patent, and then—horrid thought!—had I been hypnotising myself in Jethou? I determined to call to my aid a case-hardened disbeliever in new inventions, an enthusiastic cynic. Need I say to readers of this paper that I chose Mr. P. Wilson? I knew that he would come down to Jethou with a firm determination not to believe in what I had by now come

to call the Lifebelt. Moreover, as likely as not, he would arrive feeling very squeamish after the night voyage (he did!), and if a partially sea-sick man with the sceptical mind of a mathematician could come straight from the Board of Education and be converted at 11 o'clock in the morning, I felt that I should not need to worry any more about auto-hypnotism.

The first thing Mr. Wilson did on arrival was to argue with me that the Balmain machine was not better than his own horned H.M.V.

"Wait a bit. You've only heard the office Balmain, which is badly placed and the horn of which is not nearly so well designed as mine."

"Are you going to use an H.M.V. No. 2?"

This question put contemptuously.

"My H.M.V. No. 2 gives on my Balmain the best reproduction I've heard."

"I've brought a Virtz sound-box with me, and I'm perfectly sure that your No. 2 can't possibly give what my Virtz gives me."

"Well, what record shall I put on first?"

"Try the beginning of the Columbia *Seventh*." I demurred.

"Why choose a record that can never be a really good one?"

However, I put it on.

"Yes, it is very good," Wilson allowed. "But it's no better than my Virtz, etc., etc. Try the Columbia *Third*. There's some soft timpani work there which I've never heard except on my Virtz, etc., etc., etc."

We heard those shy timpani on my Balmain-cum-Lifebelt all right. Then he wanted to hear an oboe that couldn't be heard unless you got up on a May morning and bathed your face with dew, unless, of course, you had Wilson's Virtz sound-box, etc., etc., etc., etc., etc.

Well, he heard that oboe so clearly that he didn't recognise at first that it *was* the elusive oboe, and went on looking for it until I got the score and proved that it must be the same.

That finished Wilson, and for two days and two nights we played through record after record, going to bed tired but triumphant in the not so wee sma' hours.

To give a detailed account of the different experiments we made with various degrees of flexibility, with various angles of the needle, and with the various weights of sound-boxes and tone-arms would be wearisome, but we managed to establish the following facts:—

1. That a light weight on the record gave a better tone.
2. That the greater the flexibility, provided there was no accompanying flabbiness, the better the reproduction.
3. That the wear on records was reduced to a minimum.

4. That the second half of a record showed no loss of power and no lowering of pitch. This was already a distinguishing mark of the Balmain reproduction, but the use of the Lifebelt added this quality to other instruments.
5. That all the quality of the romantic sound-box was added to the brilliant sound-box without any loss of the brilliancy.
6. That my early Parlophone records with an unpleasant rattle lost it when played with the Lifebelt.
7. That early Columbia and Vocalion records which were formerly drowned by their scratch gained such an extra amount of tone that the scratch was much less noticeable.
8. That blasting was entirely done away with unless, of course, it was due to a fault in the record, in which case it would be much worse.
9. That all the ringing vibrations formerly communicated by the tone-arm to the ears of the listener were absorbed by the rubber, but that there was in no single instance the slightest loss of resonance in consequence. I should qualify this in the case of fibre needles, and confirmed fibre users may not find that the Lifebelt helps them as much as it will help steel users.
10. That the only danger was that the needle might jump the groove. This, I may add, has only happened on one or two Parlophone and Polydor records, but never on any other of the two thousand or more that I have played with the Lifebelt. This jumping can now be guarded against by a simple device which Mr. Griffith has just added to his Lifebelt.
11. That the very loudest needles, like Trumpeters, could be used without the least harshness and with an enormous increase in realism for orchestral records.

As soon as I found that Mr. Wilson was as perfectly satisfied as I was that on all "forward" instruments, or shall I say on all instruments with an internal or external horn, and not a rectangular amplifier, the improvement was incontestable, I told him that I intended to give the public the benefit of Mr. Griffith's discovery immediately the patent was through. Mr. Wilson, however, felt convinced that he would never be able to patent his device. He pointed out that anybody could acquire a piece of rubber tubing and that anybody could sell a piece of rubber tubing. I agreed with this, but I argued that our experience had proved conclusively that *any* piece of rubber tubing was *not* enough. It required to be of exactly the right resiliency to do its work, and I considered that any sensible gramophone would not, for the sake of a paltry 5s., deny himself the advantage of our experience. My plan was to get a variety of types of the Lifebelt and when we had definitely decided which was the best

to issue them to the public at that price. I added that I did not much mind if the patent failed to go through. I was anxious that Mr. Griffith should have some material benefit from his discovery and I said that I was sure that, if I backed his Lifebelt, I could count on our readers not bothering about anybody else's. The only thing that really did worry me was the comparative lack of improvement with the H.M.V. instrument. Would Mr. Wilson make a few experiments on his own account at home, and see if it could not be brought into line with the rest? I gave him *carte blanche* to get any moulds made that he considered necessary, and I also asked him to obtain the opinions of one or two people whose opinions would be worth while. I particularly wanted to know what Mr. Balmain thought about it.

Mr. Wilson went home, and a day or two later I had a letter from Mr. Balmain to say that he had been using a piece of rubber-tubing himself for years and that many other gramophonists did the same. With the letter he sent from his museum an old Pathé sound-box with a piece of rubber tubing attached. He sent at the same time an article on the principle of flexibility which is printed in this number. This did not look much like any patent going through. By the same post Mr. Wilson wrote me an account of his talk with Mr. Balmain and enclosed a piece of rubber tubing that Mr. Balmain used—a beer-connector. But when I tried this, which was very flabby, I found that it merely gave a kind of mellowness to the music while taking out of it all the "bite." In other words the Balmain beer-connector was merely another method of romanticising the record.

This encouraged me, because it too seemed to prove that any piece of rubber tubing was not good enough. That rubber tubing had to possess exactly the right amount of resiliency to make it a genuine Lifebelt. The next item of news was that another patent method of achieving flexibility had been filed at the Patent Office. This was encouraging, because it seemed to indicate that other people were on the track of this desirable quality. Then Mr. Virtz sent me one of his sound-boxes, and I found that he had achieved a measure of flexibility by the free use of rubber. On top of this Mr. Griffith wrote to say that his patent had been accepted, and that I could make the announcement when I chose. Exasperating delays with the moulds have held things up for a while, and even as I write these words I do not know if we shall be able to offer the public our Lifebelt as an obtainable commodity on the first of November as I had hoped.

I feel confident that it will be worth everybody's while to spend 5s. on this simple device. If it does not improve an instrument the owner must be content to have wasted 5s. on a good cause, because if in addition to 5s. he will spend three-half pence on a

letter telling me about this failure he will enormously help our observations. On some instruments the use of the Lifebelt will effect what will seem a *miraculous* improvement. The owner of a small Cellophone on which I tried the Lifebelt looked at me as if I was a sorcerer. An instrument whose value I doubled with the Lifebelt was the Apollo, one of which I had down here to try for a while. I did not use its own sound-box, which I find very bad, but with a Virtz and the Lifebelt I got from the Apollo a performance that would have made Messrs. Craies and Stavridi wonder if they ought not to have called the original instrument the Marsyas. It's only the sound-box that's wrong with the Apollo at present. With a good sound-box it would be a splendid instrument. With the Lifebelt added it would be a real top-notcher.

No sooner had the excitement of the Lifebelt been somewhat allayed by the business of trying to discover a way of offering it to the public in the most suitable form than a fresh excitement was provided by His Master's Voice in the shape of a new instrument, which by the time these words are published will have made its bow. And a most remarkable production it is, how remarkable all readers of this paper will understand when I say that *for the first time since I became an inveterate user of the Balmain I have genuinely doubted which performance I preferred*. What the effect is going to be on the vast public that has never heard the Balmain I almost tremble to think. Even the most cynical who will have read that Sir Edward Elgar, Sir Landon Ronald, Mr. Albert Coates and Mr. Eugene Goossens for the second time in twelve months have pronounced a new instrument to be a revolution in gramophones will forbear to smile. To be sure, they will expect that presently Sir Henry Wood, Sir Hamilton Harty, Herr Felix Weingartner and Herr Bruno Walter will proclaim an even more startling revolution to be capped, of course, by Sir Edward Elgar and Co. a few months later, and so on and so on. I must confess that these outbursts of approval would ring a little more true if Sir Edward Elgar and his colleagues discovered that a Columbia instrument was a real knock-out, or if Sir Henry Wood and his colleagues prostrated themselves before a product of His Master's Voice. For the next revolutionary instrument I suggest the following testimonials :—

Sir Phœbus Apollo says :

" I consider your new instrument as much an advance on ordinary gramophones as my lyre was upon earlier stringed instruments."

Mr. Orpheus says :

" I could charm even a motor-omnibus with your new instrument."

Saint Cecilia says :

" There is nothing in Paradise to touch your new instrument."

However, in the case of the No. 4, as I shall call the new H.M.V. instrument for convenience, a good deal of genuine enthusiasm is justifiable. The No. 4 is a definite advance on every instrument now on the market, and if, as we must in charity suppose, Sir Edward Elgar, Sir Landon Ronald, Mr. Coates, and Mr. Goossens have never heard any gramophones except the other H.M.V. productions, they may be forgiven for talking this nonsense about revolution, for judged by their earlier products it is a revolution. But I should be talking equal nonsense if I were to suggest that this new gramophone takes us more than a few yards on the way to that apparently so remote goal—the perfect reproduction of recorded sound. I should be talking nonsense too if I were to suggest that recent advances in recording itself had gained more than a few yards in that great unconquered world of sound. At the same time, I do not want to appear unduly pessimistic, and I have some confidence that in a year or two we really shall get very much better recording. I gather from our correspondence recently that there is an inclination among our readers to suppose that all older recordings belong to a palæolithic past. Not at all! New methods of recording have scored heavily in the reproduction of the chorus, but so far with one notable exception from the Columbia Company last month the reproduction of the solo-voice has in every case been less pleasing than formerly. The exaggeration of sibilants by the new method is abominable, and there is often a harshness which recalls some of the worst excesses of the past. The recording of massed strings is atrocious from an impressionistic standpoint. I don't want to hear symphonies with an American accent. I don't want blue-nose violins and Yankee clarinets. I don't want the piano to sound like a free-lunch counter. And if the only merit of the new H.M.V. instrument were its mitigation of the whining infancy of the new recording I should not be much impressed by it. Fortunately it has many other claims on our admiration.

In the first place, the No. 4 succeeds in bringing out the bass *without* sacrificing the treble. That will probably be the first thing that strikes the listener. Of course, I have not had time yet to be perfectly convinced that there is absolutely no sacrifice of the treble; but I feel as nearly positive as one can feel about anything in the gramophonic world that my ear is not going to tire gradually of the No. 4. I cannot detect the least tendency toward deadness, and I can honestly affirm that so far I have not once suspected any novelty of reproduction as the cause of my pleasure. I feel that the No. 4 offers a common ground on which

the devotees of Mr. Virtz and Captain Barnett—to choose the extremes of two schools—may meet. At the same time it would be most unfair to suggest that the No. 4 is a compromise. A compromise implies that both sides have sacrificed something to attain it. In this case nothing has been sacrificed.

The second important merit of the No. 4 is its open and forward tone. After corking up so much loveliness of sound all these years His Master's Voice owed us a good deal in this respect, and with the No. 4 it has wiped out a heavy debt. No machine on the market places the sound better, and very few indeed have contrived to place it as well.

In volume and resonance the No. 4 is unsurpassed, and I am inclined to hazard that it is unequalled. At the same time, the scratch is notably less. This achievement must be hailed as a triumph. Finally, the alignment is as good as possible.

Where then does the new instrument fall short of perfection? Unquestionably it is least successful with the human voice. This is not to say that an immense majority of the gramophone public will not enjoy its reproduction of singing. But I venture to suggest that every connoisseur of singing will criticise its tendency to falsify the voice. It helps a moderate singer, but it hurts the best singers by depriving them of some of their individuality. And this is equally true of basses and sopranos, so that it is not a matter of favouring one kind of voice at the expense of another. At first I was inclined to blame the amplifier, but after a long and exhausting series of trials I have come to the conclusion that the sound-box is the culprit. Moreover, it is not a matter of newer recording. The latest vocal records are without exception better with a Virtz sound-box, whether played on the Balmain or on the No. 4 instrument. I have taken the trouble to test this assertion with the records of singers whose voices I know well apart from the records of them. With the No. 4 sound-box they all acquire a fruity resonance which is unnatural. My final tests were made with records of the speaking voice, and I am completely satisfied that the little more is a very great deal too much in this case. We do not want Sir H. Walford Davies to sound like a town-crier. So I suggest that anybody who gets rid of his old H.M.V. machine and invests in this new one should keep his old sound-box, whether it be an Exhibition or a No. 2. He is going to find that sound-box very useful on the new machine. He will want the old sound-box sometimes even for orchestral records published so late as last month. I am referring to a charming record of Järnefelt's *Praeludium* conducted by Sir Henry Wood and issued by Columbia. So, I repeat, when he scraps his old H.M.V., let him keep his old sound-box. By the way, what does happen to old gramophones

when they have been supplanted? Of course many of them are palmed off on novices, but when one thinks of the thousands that go out of date and are no longer used even by novices, one does wonder where they go. I never remember seeing one used as a birdcage, or as a rabbit-hutch, or as a portable larder. I never hear of one being turned into a camera or a workbox, nor do I know of any room that is panelled with old gramophone cabinets. I cannot believe that people would light their fires with mahogany and waxed oak, and altogether their ultimate end is a profound mystery. Perhaps the arrival of the new H.M.V. machine will help to solve this problem, for it seems inevitable that during the next three months thousands of discredited old H.M.V.'s will have to learn some new profession. I don't see any prospect of adapting the old machines, for the insides of the new ones are quite different. However, I may be wrong about this, and I hope no reader will jump to a conclusion in either direction.

The first thing that strikes the observer when he examines the new instrument is the small circumference of the tone-arm compared with any he has hitherto encountered. My own experiments with the Balmain-cum-Lifebelt had already led me to ask myself if it was not essential to have a long narrow channel between the sound-box and the beginning of the horn in order to secure forward reproduction. Just as you have to have a certain amount of resistance to expel a pea from a pea-shooter, so it looks as if you must have a certain amount of resistance to expel the sound from a gramophone. I may be talking nonsense acoustically, but it is certainly a coincidence that I should have put forward this theory to Mr. Wilson and also to Mr. Balmain when criticising a new horn he had designed, and that the new H.M.V. tone-arm should apparently bear out my theory. The No. 4 sound-box is a large one and without springs; the diaphragm is mica. The Quidnuncs, Hownows, and Whatnots of the gramophone world opine that this new sound-box will require tuning every six months like a piano, in which case it will have to be sent back to Hayes. I fancy that some of their pessimism is due to the fact that they won't be able to take a pair of pincers and tune the sound-box themselves. However, in another six months we shall be able to say more about this than now. Anyway it is a matter of small importance in my opinion. The amplifier seems to me to be on the same lines as that of the Apollo, and to judge from its outward appearance of more interest to a plumber than anybody else. The great thing about it is that it does its job. With regard to the rest of the mechanism and the general appearance of the new instrument, the fact that it comes from His Master's Voice is equivalent to saying that it is as good as it is possible to be.

After I had had ten days with the new instrument I came up to town for another ten days, where I had neither leisure nor desire to listen to the gramophone. Back at Jethou I find the No. 4 even better than I had supposed it to be. The Balmain helped by the life-belt and using the No. 4 sound-box of its rival can still beat it on orchestral records; but it can only just beat it, and when I think of the smashing victories gained hitherto by the Balmain against all comers, I regard the newcomer with something like awe. I shall leave to the fibre enthusiasts the task of criticising the No. 4 from their standpoint, because I've really not had the time to worry with the nervous strain of wondering whether the fibre will last out a record. It's a big responsibility to criticise a new instrument like this, and I avoid anything that tends to increase the nervous strain. This evening I have been listening to old Columbia records on the No. 4, and very well both instrument and records have stood the test. Yes, it's a wonderful machine. I've not had time to experiment on it with the Lifebelt. The shape we have adopted for the latter will have to be narrowed to suit the No. 4 tone-arm. At the same time the unsatisfactory trial I made of a few vocal records led me to suppose that the comparative unsuccess of the new machine with the human voice might be remedied with the aid of the Lifebelt. Galli-Curci came out much more like herself with that and a Virtz sound-box than with the No. 4 which made her sound very flat. McCormack, too, came out more like himself; on some of the latest records the No. 4 turns him into a Tamagno.

When I was in London I paid a visit to Hayes and had an enthralling talk about the gramophonic future with Mr. Alfred Clarke and Mr. Buckle. That future is brighter than it has ever been. That was the opinion both at Hayes and at the Columbia headquarters. It was a relief to find such an atmosphere in these days of depression. Nor was this atmosphere being pumped into me like artificial ozone. It was as genuine as the sea-wind round Jethou. I had an opportunity at Hayes of hearing the smaller models of the new instrument. The portable is really a little marvel. It's not quite the thing for the editor of THE GRAMOPHONE to say, but I really do feel rather sorry for other portables.

In addition to my visit to London I went up to Glasgow and had the pleasure of addressing a large audience of enthusiasts. Whether it was due to Miss Peggy O'Neil's open letter to me or to my ungallant remarks in these columns about women I do not know, but certainly there were more women than men at that Glasgow meeting, and I do not expect to see so many pretty girls at close range until I go to Scotland again. I must confess that a few pretty young women in

full view do help me to talk with a fluency that I cannot achieve when confronted by a line of middle-aged male enthusiasts. I found the committee of the Glasgow Gramophone Society most anxious to do everything to promote another Congress, and I feel confident that next March we shall eclipse our success in London this summer.

Now, I must return for a moment to the subject of the Lifebelt. I find that we shall perhaps be able to supply a certain number by November 1st, but we shall have to take orders in rotation, and we shall have to ask our readers to use the Lifebelt coupon which they will find on another page. I am going to regard these original purchasers as pioneers and make use of their criticisms if they will allow me. It must be clearly understood that I *guarantee nothing*. In my opinion it is worth five shillings to obtain something that may treble the efficiency of a gramophone, but I am not a charlatan, and with the inadequate means at my disposal for experiment I refuse to claim for this particular Lifebelt a universal success. We have aimed at producing something that will suit the greatest variety of instruments, and if any reader can get better results from any other shape we shall only be too happy to take advantage of his discovery! Furthermore, it *must* be remembered that rubber is perishable stuff and behaves in a most unreasonable way. Mr. Wilson advises everybody to secure a couple of Lifebelts and keep the one not in use in cold water so that after a rest it can return refreshed while its companion enjoys a turn in the aquarium. We shall not make very many until we get assurances that our Lifebelts are doing something of what we believe they can do. I can assure my readers that for six months the Lifebelt has given my enthusiasm for the gramophone a vigour that had not begun to wane when the new H.M.V. instrument supplied me with another burst, and I think that by making my announcement at a moment when the interest of the gramophone world is likely to be diverted from anything else except that new instrument, I have shown my faith in the ability of the Lifebelt to do for many people at a nominal cost what the new instrument will do better for those people who can afford the larger outlay. It would have been easy to make hay (or shall I say Hayes) while the sun shone, but I preferred to wait and be absolutely sure that we were offering our readers something that was worth their while to try. But once more, do please remember that I refuse to claim too much for the Lifebelt. If it works, it will seem *marvellous*. If it doesn't, the disappointed purchaser will have to reckon himself among the many other martyrs to the cause of reproducing recorded sound.

By the way, I was talking to the Secretary of the N.G.S. last week, and I find that we have hardly

any left of the earlier issues, and precious few of any issues. I recommend members not to part with their discs too easily. In another year or two they are likely to be valuable, and in a very short time we shall be offering to buy them back at not less than the original subscribers paid for them. Gramophonists have not yet learned that rarities in records are as likely to occur as rarities in books, but as soon as I perceive that passion beginning I shall do my best to provide rarities for the discerning, and I hope to see the day when Mr. Russell of the Gramophone Exchange sends round to his customers a catalogue of choice items that will appeal to the collector. Of course, rarities exist already, but the generous and friendly spirit created by the gramophone prevents our hoarding treasures and I am already indebted to the kindness of several readers for presents of rare records which they really ought not to have given away.

We are proposing once or twice a year to issue a number in commemoration of some great composer. Our first attempt in this direction will be next month when Mozart will be celebrated not only in a series of special articles, but also with a coloured plate of the great man.

The victory of two of the "unmusical women" in our twenty-five record competition affords me peculiar gratification as an editor, because it is a proof of my ability to get the best out of our readers, and in some ways that is a more important art for an editor than getting the best out of his contributors. Henceforth I expect to see our feminine supporters dealing ruthlessly with the gramophonic male. *Morituri vos salutant.*

I have not left myself much space for the description of last month's records. Perhaps this is just as well, for to tell the truth this October vintage was on the whole a poor one. I haven't heard the Vocalions yet, for somehow they have miscarried *en route*; but there was nothing in the other lists over which I can be very enthusiastic.

The *Surprise Symphony* from Columbia was a dull production; but the Bruno Walter record of the *Midsummer Night's Dream Nocturne* and the Act 3 prelude of the *Mastersingers* was first class. None of the Columbia vocal records calls for special mention except an excellent contralto, Miss Carrie Herwin in the popular *Melisande in the Wood*. A good violin record by Bratza should be noted. I can do with all the Smetana I can get, and *Aus der Heimat* is new to the gramophone. There is a fairly funny Robey, and there is an amazing piece of realistic reproduction by a lady with an absurd name, Vaughn (*sic*) De Leath. 3720 is the number, and it is something quite remarkable. *Ukelele Lady* is one of the songs. I had a good laugh over Stanley Lupino in *Could Lloyd George Do It?* The other side is piffle.

In the H.M.V. list the new Galli-Curci is not one

of her best, but the Chaliapine is magnificent. The Heifetz is dull and skimpy. The new recording of *La Boutique Fantasque* is not so good as the old one in my opinion. Not even the new instrument can deal with this. It's really nothing but a d---d row, if I may be forgiven for swearing. Derek Oldham's record of *Who is Sylvia?* and *The Cruiskeen Lawn* is the best he has yet given us. The Schubert song is the less successful, but I've come to the conclusion that lovely though the melody is it does not suit Shakespeare's words and is impossible to sing really well. Don't forget the Backhaus and the Menges records, which are very good.

In the Parlophone list there was another of those exquisite madrigal records. I don't think the Irmler Ladies' Choir needs much recommendation to our readers, but it is always as well to go on rubbing in a really good thing. There were some interesting orchestral records, but nothing to rouse tremendous enthusiasm.

This month the Parlophone Company is publishing three 2s. 6d. records of great interest to Catholics. Members of the Westminster Cathedral Choir, accompanied by the Rev. Vernon Russell on the organ, sing the plain chant melodies of the *Te Deum* as given in the Catholic Schools Hymn Book, Palestrina's *O Salutaris*, the plain chant of the *Tantum Ergo*, and the *Asperges*, and from the *Missa de Angelis* the *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, *Credo*, *Sanctus*, and *Agnus Dei*. I feel a personal interest in these records, because in conjunction with the editor of the *Universe* I was instrumental in persuading the Parlophone Company to issue them. Catholic readers will, I am sure, do all they can to make widely known these magnificent examples of sacred music, and I am equally sure that non-Catholic readers will forgive me if I suggest that they are more than worthy of their attention. Such music speaks far more intimately to the mind and heart of man than any articles on "My Religion" by popular novelists.

COMPTON MACKENZIE.

(For Lifebelt Coupon see p. xl.)

#### TO SINGERS: TAUGHT OR UNTAUGHT

#### Mr. HERMAN KLEIN

may be consulted upon all subjects connected with

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# THE GRAMOPHONE AND THE SINGER

(Continued)

By HERMAN KLEIN

## The Treasures of Meyerbeer—III.

I HAVE been agreeably surprised at the number of good judges who have spontaneously come forward with assurances of their full sympathy and agreement in my crusade on behalf of Meyerbeer. They hope something will come of it; so do I; but whether that something will take the practical form of stage revivals remains to be seen. I appreciate, beyond all, the approbation of my accomplished Editor, whose keen perception of the beautiful in music has enabled him to see and feel the charm of Meyerbeer's style and to grasp, as I have done, the true inwardness of the present boycott of his operas. This boycott—for it is nothing less—is bound, sooner or later, to come to an end. It is too stupid and unfair to last for ever. But at least it will have had one beneficial result (and this is somewhat in the nature of a prediction): when Meyerbeer is sung again he will come to the rising generation and to the majority of current opera-goers so fresh and unfamiliar, practically so new, I may say, that they will be able to listen to him with wholly unbiased ears and enjoy him as they would any other strange master—for precisely what he is worth. Meanwhile, the gramophone alone serves as substitute for the opera-house, and, were the supply of selections only larger, a very good source of propaganda in favour of revival it would be.

With *Robert le Diable* and *Les Huguenots* I have already dealt. *Le Prophète* was the third of Meyerbeer's grand operas to see light at the Paris Opéra (then called the Théâtre de la Nation), where it was produced on April 16th, 1849. Again the libretto was by Scribe, who, taking more than the usual number of liberties with historical detail, presented a plot more remarkable for spectacular opportunities than sympathetic personages or powerful dramatic interest. The genius of Meyerbeer secured an equal balance and grandeur for all, in one of the longest scores he ever wrote. The hero, Jean de Leyden, is transformed by three fanatical Anabaptists from an inn-keeper (he was actually a tailor) into a prophet, whom we see crowned with great state in the cathedral at Münster, after leading an army and winning battles like the heaven-sent Messiah that he proclaims himself to be. In course of his upward progress the false prophet deserts his fiancée, Bertha, and renounces his faithful old mother, Fidès; and these sins cost him both his throne and his life, for in the end he commits suicide by having his palace blown

up with himself and his enemies inside it. This last offers a fitting climax to a series of superb stage spectacles, which include in the third act the picturesque Skating Ballet (one of the stage wonders of the time), and in the fourth the famous Coronation Scene where the prophet denies his mother and pretends he does not know her. The music of the latter episode is the finest in the opera, while the imposing Coronation March is, of course, familiar all the world over.

It was the Coronation Scene that provided the great tenors of the French stage—from Roger (the original Jean) and Gueymard and Duprez, down to Jean de Reszke—with their hymn of triumph, their stentorian show-piece, *Roi du ciel et des anges*, known in the Italian version as *Re del cielo*. Of this we have three interesting records, two of which were probably made at about the same period, say twenty years ago, viz., by Florencio Constantino (Col. A.848) and Francesco Tamagno (H.M.V. D.R.104). All I can say of the Constantino record is that it is smooth, clear, and bright, without impressing you particularly by the robustness of energy and *entrain* which such a piece requires. The other was done too late to represent Tamagno at his finest; it betrays signs of waning power and his besetting sin of nasality, together with moments of the old heroic nobility and force. I am, however, fond of it because, for me it is associated with two pleasurable recollections. When Tamagno first sang in *Le Prophète* at Covent Garden, in 1895, I sat most of the evening in a grand tier box facing the stage with Sir Augustus Harris, who loved this opera even more than I did. The excitable impresario, when Tamagno had filled the house with his magnificent notes in *Re del cielo*, was so delighted that he led the demand for an encore, and, what is more, he got it. That was only a year before Harris died.

The second recollection concerns Tamagno himself. Happening to be at Lugano in the summer of 1904, I thought I would run over to Varese one afternoon and fulfil an old promise by visiting the famous tenor at his *castello*, situated on the outskirts of that town. After a hot, dusty walk from the station, I found that he was out driving; but in half an hour he was back, and offered me a hearty welcome. He showed me round the castle, and took particular pride in a valuable collection of butterflies and moths which he had brought from South America and arranged in a room lined on

every side with handsome mahogany drawers. (I wonder what became of the lovely things!) But still prouder was Tamagno of something else—namely, his new gramophone, just sent by “His Master’s Voice,” with a parcel of his own records. Would I like to hear some of them? Certainly. Well, he played them for me himself, and never shall I forget the signs of intense enjoyment which he displayed in doing so, or the undisguised delight with which he listened to and commented upon the sounds created by his own voice. He leaned over and caressed the instrument, just like a child with a new plaything or a mother holding her baby to the keyboard of a piano. They were sounds worth hearing, too, and Tamagno was very happy when I told him I thought them a splendid reproduction of his wonderful voice. Among the first of the records he played, curiously enough, was this from *Le Prophète*; and I may add that on the reverse side of it is the *pastorale* sung by Jean de Leyden in the second act, a charming air known as *Sopra Berta, l’amor mio*. A trifle nasal in timbre, perhaps, but marvellously restrained and delicately graceful—for Tamagno! A much later rendering of the *Inno Trionfale, Re del cielo*, by Antonio Paoli (H.M.V., D.A.409), is sung with chorus and completes it to the end of the act. The solo voice is extremely resonant and powerful, and the ringing high notes are of good quality.

The famous contralto air, *Ah! mon fils*, was never, unfortunately, to be recorded by the illustrious original Fidès, Pauline Viardot-Garcia. There is, however, an excellent version extant by Ernestine Schumann-Heink (H.M.V., D.B.414), now somewhat *passé* as a record, but otherwise very sweet and tender; a more up-to-date, but badly executed, effort by Maria Olzewska (in German, Polydor B.24115), whose rich beauty of tone is completely absent, in spite of the poignant pathos of her expression; and, finally, a really magnificent rendering in German by Sabine Kalter (Odeon XX.72661), not only of this air, *Ach! mein Sohn*, but of the immensely difficult aria sung by Fidès in the last act, *L’ingrato m’abbandona*, or, rather, so much of it as the disc could provide room for. It is extremely long, and no one nowadays can sing it without cuts, if at all. Nevertheless, this performance of Sabine Kalter’s is alike vocally and dramatically superb. I can also commend a French record of *Ah! mon fils* made for the French H.M.V. by Suzanne Brohly (W.441). It is welcome as a faithful example of the true Meyerbeer school, sung by a member of the Opéra-Comique, who imparts to it without effort the dignity and dramatic quality that it demands. Voice and diction are alike admirable.

*L’Etoile du Nord* belongs to the répertoire of the Paris Opéra-Comique, where it was first given on February 16th, 1854. The sole record available

from its delightful pages is the prayer and barcarolle, *Veille sur eux toujours*, which I mentioned under its Italian title in the first of these “Treasure” articles and was one of Patti’s most inspired achievements. It is here sung by Amelita Galli-Curci (H.M.V., D.B.597), who is, I think, more successful in the florid barcarolle than in the pathetic melody of the prayer, which she overloads with *portamenti*. As usual, her *coloratura* is brilliant and accurate, but the cadenza with flute which she introduces at the end is not in the opera and sounds banal here.

*Dinorah*, originally called *Le Pardon de Ploërmel*, was also produced at the Opéra-Comique (April 4th, 1859), the libretto being by MM. Barbier and Carré, the authors of Gounod’s *Faust*. Would that the story were equally attractive, instead of being undeniably dull and stupid! The skill and resource of the musician, coupled with the art of the singer, have alone availed to preserve from oblivion one of the cleverest scores that have come to us from Meyerbeer’s pen. Yet little of it is heard now beyond the two excerpts that survive in the gramophone catalogues, to wit, the *Shadow Song* and the baritone air, *Sei vendicata assai*. The former is sung by Dinorah in the second act, where the distraught maiden, vainly seeking for her lost goat, suddenly comes upon her own shadow in the moonlight and, for lack of another companion, invites it to join her in dance and song. The outcome is one of the most graceful and fascinating waltz-airs ever written for the voice—and one of the best-known.

Yet, hackneyed as it is, the *Ombra leggiera* is seldom faultlessly sung. Why cannot gifted sopranos like Mme. Galli-Curci (H.M.V. 260) be satisfied to sing it straight through as it was written, without altering and cutting out whole passages—not because she cannot do them perfectly, but merely to leave room somewhere for one of those long, eternal interchanges with the flute which seem (ever since David composed *Charmant Oiseau*) to form the essential *tour de force* of every “international” artist’s cadenza? But the ease and fluency of the scale work, the elegance of the ornamentation, the rhythmical flow of the waltz-tune—all this and more simply delights the critical ear, for it is Galli-Curci at her best. Selma Kurz (Polydor J.24014) makes fewer cuts, yet adopts a slightly slower tempo and sings her phrases with a clean attack and well-marked rhythm. She is not quite so brilliant as her Italian rival, but is neatness personified; which is more than can be said for the orchestral accompaniment. Luisa Tetrazzini (H.M.V., D.B.534), with her characteristic tone, her sure and effective execution, her admirable trills and *staccati*, trips gaily and lightly through the well-worn dance, though to my ear, her cleverness sounds just a trifle mechanical.

This is a fault not to be found with the alert, joyous rendering of Eugénie Bronskaya (Col. A.5210), which, by the way, sounded particularly good for pure vocal quality on the Sonora Model. I liked this record better and better on closer acquaintance.

All the prominent baritones of our day have a try in the concert-room at *Sei vendicata assai*, but only two or three seem to have recorded it. Best among these is Pasquale Amato (H.M.V., D.B.636), whose style is very *legato*, with suavity of manner and unaffected sentiment to match. His fine voice suggests exactly the kind of remorse that Hoël in the opera is supposed to feel when he addresses the insensible form of his deserted Dinorah. On the other hand, Titta Ruffo (H.M.V., D.B.178), intelligent singer as he is, uses his colossal organ as though the reproaches ought to come from him; or is it really that he wants to show how angry he is with himself? Enrico de Franceschi's (Parlophone E.10221) is a good average rendering, in very dark tone, marked by little colour or variety. And so much for *Dinorah*.

*L'Africaine* was truly Meyerbeer's "swan-song." Scribe handed him the libretto in 1852, but the score was not entirely completed until 1864, the year of his death; and it was only produced at the Opéra on April 28th, 1865. The fact that he did not live to witness its performance is doubly regrettable, because, in the opinion of many, this posthumous work was the greatest of Meyerbeer's masterpieces. Personally, I love every note of it. I have enjoyed precious opportunities for hearing it to the highest advantage. It was my good fortune to hear at Covent Garden the original Vasco de Gama (Naudin) and the original Nelusko (Faure), together with the finest of all Selikas, Pauline Lucca; while in 1879, in Paris, I saw also that incomparable Nelusko, Lassalle, with Vergnet as Vasco and Mme. Krauss as Selika. The records of the opera available to-day are not by singers of this calibre; none the less, a few of them are very good and I will briefly point out their merits in their order as they occur in the score.

The first and the only one from the opening act is the romance for Inès, sung in German by Käte Herwig (Polydor O.943019), which I did not find satisfactory until I had tried it with the softening effect of the Sonora model, which always favours the voice rather than the instrumentation. This piece begins, however, with long unaccompanied phrases, followed by a strain of graceful melody (*Adieu, mon beau rivage*), and Fr. Herwig delivers both with a suitably sweet *legato*. Her cadenza, though, is not Meyerbeer's. From the prison scene of Act II., where Vasco de Gama is detained with his two slaves, Selika and Nelusko, I have the lovely *berceuse* or *air du sommeil* sung by the African queen to her sleeping hero (*Figlio del Sol*, Col. D.8076). Half of it is cut, however, to get it on a

10in. disc, and the singing of the fascinating tune by Eugenia Burzio has no special charm. The number for Nelusko which succeeds it is one of the gems of the opera, and is known in the German as *Dir, o Königin* (Polydor B.22054), which, sad to relate, is the sole version at my disposal. It is fairly well sung by Heinrich Schlusnus, but the orchestra, one feels, ought to be in the prison and the Nelusko at liberty. The succeeding septet (unrecorded) is another "treasure"; and, oddly enough, the principal theme of it is almost identical with that of *The Minstrel Boy*.

The third act takes place on the deck of Vasco's Portuguese galleon—a marvellous picture illustrated by marvellous music, with Nelusko as the leading figure in each. He it is who causes the vessel's course to be changed, whereby she is wrecked and at the mercy of his barbaric brethren. Titta Ruffo has a splendid though brief record of the stirring call (*All'erta, marinari*, H.M.V., D.A.164), wherewith Nelusko arouses the sleeping sailors. But even more striking is his famous ballad, *Adamastor, roi des vagues profondes*, one of the most original things of the kind ever written. Each of the four examples I possess of this has good points to recommend it: for example, the amazing energy and fine tone of Titta Ruffo (H.M.V., D.B.406); the clear coherent declamation of Pasquale Amato (H.M.V., D.B.637); the sonorous voice and vigorous rhythm of Giacomo Rimini (Voc. A.0202); and, last but not least, the very excellent rendering in French by Roy Henderson (Voc. K.051585), bold and vivacious in style, resonant in tone, and declaimed with plenty of contrast. In fact, I am inclined to admire the Englishman's effort as much as the Italians', which is saying a good deal.

In what part of Africa the fourth act is located, Scribe never disclosed, and no one has ever discovered. But it must be a kind of tropical paradise; for thus the joyful Portuguese explorer apostrophises it in the great tenor air which is the best-known piece in the opera. No fewer than fifteen records of *O Paradiso sorti de l'onde* have come to hand, and there are doubtless as many more, though not all of similar quality. It is a noble bit of music and very exacting for the singer. Space compels me, however, to deal briefly with my material. Finest of all is Enrico Caruso (H.M.V., D.B.117), for its glorious tone, ease, reserve of strength, sense of triumph and joy. Giovanni Martinelli (H.M.V., D.B.336) gives a melancholy tinge and his timbre is thin. Beniamino Gigli (H.M.V., D.B.109) has animation and power, a well-covered tone, but drags the tempo—as indeed do most of them. Bernardo de Muro (H.M.V., D.B.549) is resonant and clear, but pinches his head-notes. Fernand Ansseau (H.M.V., D.A.427) uses to advantage the dark French vowels, phrases broadly, and has a strong, steady tone. Evan

Williams (H.M.V., D.B.443), on the contrary, loses by tight English (Welsh) sounds and has no distinction of style. Florencio Constantino (Col. A.5109) is robust, yet refined and artistic. Hipolito Lazaro (Col. 7343) displays an easy *sostenuto* and telling B flats, but his tone is unequal. Charles Hackett (Col. 7366) sings splendidly, combining taste with power and opulence of tone. V. Rosing (Voc. A.0209) suffers from a persistent vibrato and dull, lugubrious style. Armand Tokatyan (Voc. A.0224) also trembles slightly and his "white" timbre is monotonous. Alfred Piccaver (Polydor J.22015) impresses very favourably with his strong steady voice and notable breadth of style. Lenghi-Cellini (Parlo. E.10044) displays some good points. Mario Chamlee (Bruns. 15040A) sustains big tone without effort and does justice to his theme. Nicola Fusati (Velvet-Face 607) has a capital organ, but his tremolo is disturbing and he drags terribly.

From Act IV. there remains to note a rather feeble record of the *Marche Indienne* (Polydor O.40844), and a rough but effective one of Nelusko's cavatina (*Wie hat mein Herz geschlagen*, Polydor B.22088), by Heinrich Schlusnus on the reverse side of the *Dir, o Königin*. But the cavatina, without the chorus, is also recorded by the inimitable Battistini (*Averla tanto amata*, H.M.V., D.B.210) in a manner that I can only describe as magnificent. Finally, the touching scene of Selika's suicide beneath the poisonous upas tree in Act V. receives delicate treatment from Lilly Hafgren-Dinkela (Polydor B.24000), in the German version, of course, and very sweet and tender in sentiment without any strong sense of pathos or tragedy.

With this I conclude a task which I have regarded both as a duty and a labour of love. If I have interested my readers in Meyerbeer and pointed the way for a renascence of some of his operas I shall indeed be content.

HERMAN KLEIN.



### Thoughts on Music

One of our earliest readers, Mr. Hervey Elwes, has made a collection of thoughts on music in the form of a calendar—one quotation for each day of the year—which we hope to publish in good time for Christmas. He has searched far and near for interesting quotations—among the "near" ones his gleanings from THE GRAMOPHONE itself are among the happiest—and he has strung them together into chains of thought about various aspects of music, thus making a charming book likely to appeal to all our readers, who will soon be looking about for the obvious, but not too obvious, Christmas present for a gramophonic friend. Full particulars will be given in the next number.

### Columbia Enterprise

What we are accustomed to refer to as the usual Columbia "centre double-spread" has suddenly blossomed this month into an eight-page supplement—a development which we welcome. There have been several indications of a growing sense among our advertisers that the readers of THE GRAMOPHONE want something more than a "bald boost" in the advertisement pages. For instance, the notes on the use of miniature scores in recent issues have been of real value as information besides advertising the existence of Messrs. Goodwin and Tabb; and several others of our advertisers have shown a notable skill in adding to, rather than detracting from, the general interest of the paper. This is good sense, and, we hope, also good business; for if an experiment such as this of the Columbia Company is appreciated we may eventually reach a stage when every reader will feel impelled to read every line that is written in THE GRAMOPHONE from cover to cover.

\* \* \*

### Language Records

The article on "Languages on the Gramophone" in last month's *Forum* brought a good deal of correspondence, and the lady (again a lady!) who wrote it was justified in drawing especial attention to the Linguaphone records. From a convent in Scotland comes the additional news that these records have been found very useful by students of singing who wish to improve their accents in dealing with songs in foreign languages. At the same time the Linguaphone Co. has sent us some of the latest recordings, which include some 12in. discs of a more advanced course in French and Italian. There have been several references to the Linguaphone method in THE GRAMOPHONE, in view of which it is perhaps necessary to say that the surface of the records is now greatly improved, and that with well-arranged text-books and "keys" for each language the whole system of these linguistic courses is extremely practical and well arranged. We shall be glad to hear from any reader who has actually learnt a language by the records, since at present we are merely testifying to what *appears* to be a very sound investment.

\* \* \*

### The New H.M.V. Machines

These have already been on view for a fortnight, and as we go to press the indications are that even the great Hayes factory will be unable to cope with the demand; which makes us all the more delighted that the Gramophone Co. sent us no less than three of the finest models before the rush came. A princely gift which is deeply appreciated.



A SLIGHT DISAGREEMENT

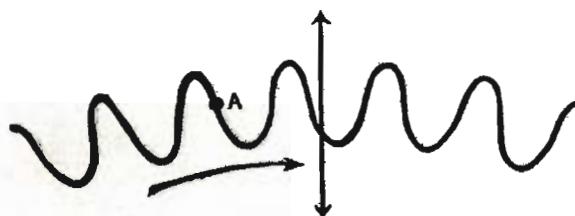
# RUBBER-NECKS

## —THE WHY AND WHEREFORE

By C. BALMAIN

NOW that interest in the old question of rubber-necks has been revived by the activities of our Editor, it will perhaps not be out of place to examine critically the causes, or apparent causes, which render rubber connections more efficient than the ordinary connector of the metal tube type. To get a true appreciation of the matter it is first of all necessary to get down to fundamentals. The gramophone and the records reproduced thereon are, as I have frequently urged, mechanically unsound in their most vital essentials and such deficiencies must be understood before the functional utility of the rubber-neck can be truly appraised.

Let us start with the record as the beginning of the trouble; we shall at this stage ignore all the manifold imperfections introduced in the recording room through the agencies of horn echoes, horn "fundamentals," acoustically incorrect recording rooms, inequalities in the wax (or soap), changes of temperature, etc. A record is cut by the recording tool in a continuous line (not in a straight line as it should be but in a diminishing concentric, the effect of which we shall consider later) and at such a low speed as permits the thrust and recoil of the diaphragm between wave crests to form, through its agent the cutting stylus, a track through the wax which when magnified would, in its very simplest form, look something like this:—



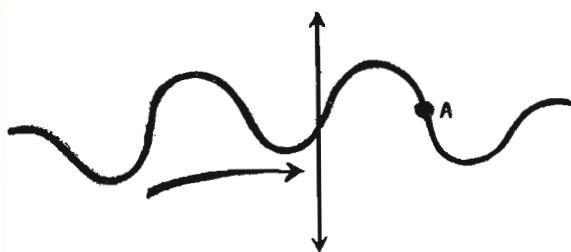
Of course, the contours are much more complicated in an ordinary record and the line would be almost straight in the tiny portion of a record track herein depicted in highly magnified form, but it is shown thus to convey the impression of a circular track and it should be noted that the waves are imprinted on the record at anything from hundreds to thousands per second. They are generally invisible to the naked eye. Note specially that the time period is per second not per minute, as this is very important in the consideration of this mechanical problem.

We have now to consider how the reversal of the recording process gives us back a portion of the

sound employed—only a small portion be it noted—in cutting the original record. We shall confine ourselves to the purely mechanical side of the question, ignoring altogether the molecular side as not germane to present considerations.

The efficient and correct production of sound by a gramophone sound-box requires that the needle shall be impelled at right angles to the face of the diaphragm, which lies or should lie in the same plane as the pivoting points on which the needle holder swings. This being so, it is clear that the really efficient gramophone must be provided with some means whereby the needle shall be pulled and pushed alternately from side to side without the slightest side strain. This, so far, can be effected only by the use of electro-magnets placed at the back and front of the needle (I ignore direct action on the diaphragm types) but as electrical impulsation, besides being costly and troublesome, brings with it unwanted disturbances, we are still far from achieving the perfect gramophone. Right-angle impulsation being, however, the desired aim, let us see how near or how far from attaining it we are under existing conditions. Brute force has to take the place of the scientific method and it is here that we must give some thought to the rules governing ordinary mechanical motion. The problem we have to consider is the transition of forward motion into motion at right angles to that forward path. Let us look at our diagram again; the double-headed arrow indicates the direction of the needle's backward and forward motion, which is theoretically at right angles to the general direction line of the track. The single arrow shows the direction of rotation of the disc. The point of the needle is shown as a small dot in the track at A. Now let us consider the action of the left wall of the track on the needle. The action of another "easy" but unmechanical way of doing a job will help us to understand what takes place. When we close a door the face plate attached to the side post of the door frame is more or less violently struck by the protruding spring catch of the door. The blow delivered forces the catch in a direction at right angles to the direction of the blow. This is exactly what happens to the needle when struck by the side wall of the record track. In both cases there is a severe side strain in attaining the right-angle motion and the extent of that side strain is proportional to the angle of the edge which is the agent for converting the forward motion into

a right-angle motion. Thus it is we find some doors close more easily than others, ease or difficulty is all a question of the angle at which the spring catch has been cut in relation to the face plate—the smaller the angle, the smoother the action. It follows, therefore, that the more the sound waves on our track are compressed in a linear direction the greater will be the angle at which the walls hit the needle and the greater will be the side strains set up. This will be seen more readily if we consider the same track as before spread out thus:—



In such a track side strain would be reduced to a minimum, as there would be no violent contact between the side of the track and the needle—practically the whole of the work would be done by the needle point, which would flow evenly from side to side in agreement with the easy contours of the guiding line. Unfortunately, such a track is impossible under present conditions, as it would necessitate running the record at double the present speed and thus render present sized records inadequate to contain even the shortest of short musical compositions. The gain in brilliance and in faithfulness of reproduction would be enormous as all the overtones, which are at present largely lost owing to the compression of the sound-wave, would be rendered in their true relation to the fundamental notes. The converse to this holds, as anyone may satisfy oneself by playing first, on an ordinary gramophone a record at 80 revolutions per minute and then playing the same piece of music by the same orchestra on a machine designed to equalise the linear speed of track movement by altering the speed of rotation of the disc. The object aimed at in this type of record is, of course, the provision of more music on the disc than can be obtained at the higher speed used in ordinary recording. By comparison with the sounds emitted by the slow-moving long-run machine, the ordinary 80-revolution machine gives forth a brilliant rendering of whatever piece of music may have been recorded in both styles. Our Editor has remarked on this quality or lack of quality in discussing one of these devices tested by him. These considerations are germane also to the question of the flattening of pitch towards the centre of records. The point to be noted is that the slower the rate of revolution the steeper will be the incline up which the needle has to be forced in its backward and forward journey. The terms

“steeper” and “incline” are incorrect, of course, as we are not dealing with the phono’ or vertical cut but with horizontal movements. The terms are useful, however, for the purpose of graphically describing the action which is taking place and they also enable us to visualise the extent of the side strain on the needle on the ordinary tone arm, without the rubber neck, as the needle can move only in one direction, owing to the fact that the pivoting points of the needle bar are, for all practical purposes in this connection, held immovably by the metal neck of the tone arm. The greater the side strain, the poorer the reproduction—this is an infallible rule as it is founded upon purely mechanical laws which cannot be altered to suit man’s hunt for the cheap and handy gramophone. So great may the side strain be in powerful passages that actual stoppage may take place if the spring of the motor is weak. Loss of pitch is a common result. We might say much as to the effect on the wear of the track due to side strains set up as shown, reinforced by the additional side strains due to the speed of rotation in relation to the capacity of the particular type of sound-box in use to respond to the frequency of the distorted sound-waves imprinted on a circular track and again reinforced by the additional side strains due to the angle of error of the sound-box in tracking, which last disturbing element varies in intensity throughout the whole needle journey in accordance with its position outside or inside of the point, if any, at which the sound-box lies at right angles to the record track.

But all these considerations, which would require many diagrams for their proper elucidation, may be ignored for the purposes of the present discussion, so long as we concentrate on the fundamental idea that side strains on the needle should be abolished as far as possible. It is here that the value of the rubber-neck becomes evident. It is clear from the considerations set forth above that were we in a position to attach our sound-box to the tone arm by means of a universal joint which had the capacity of enabling the sound-box to play the part of Mr. Facing-Both-Ways, we should eliminate most of the side strains from which we suffer. The ideal of a universal joint which would enable the sound-box to make the extremely rapid movements necessary to conform to the variations of the sound track is, of course, an impossible one—the error lies in the fixed nature of the pivoting points—but anything which will enable the needle to avoid the extreme violence of the side pressures of the record track and at the same time permit it to carry out, without loss, its function of conveying the momentum derived from the record track to the diaphragm, is to be commended. The rubber-neck scores here and it would be difficult to construct a connection of metal or other material which would

in addition to its ability to give immediately to sudden side strains, possess the property of extremely rapid recovery to the normal position. These qualities are possessed by rubber in a marked degree under certain favourable conditions which unfortunately do not last indefinitely. It is apparently largely a question of treatment of the rubber during manufacture and whilst in use. Rapid deterioration is all too common and the causes—temperature, moisture, etc.—are beyond our control. If this is recognised, and allowed for, there should be no difficulty in providing a rubber connection for any gramophone, which could be replaced at small cost two or three times a year if necessary. But, and there is a but, it must be distinctly understood that there are dangers in the use of rubber connections. It will be necessary to ensure, when affixing the sound-box to the tone arm that the sound-box shall lie, as near as possible, at the correct angle in relation to the record track. This is not so easy as it may appear, and caution is needed in order to avoid losses due to accentuation of the angle of tracking error which cannot be avoided in the present mode of construction. Again, danger arises through excessive flexibility of the rubber. If the flexibility takes the form of over torsion or twisting, this will exhibit itself by the plunging of the sound-box, which will in turn show itself in an alteration of pitch on continued notes. Such a connector must be discarded as its use, if persisted in, will result in the destruction of the record track at the points of greatest stress, usually loud passages or towards the end of the record where the additional side strain due to the smaller circumference of the record circle causes an additional clutching action on the needle. This torsional flexibility, though useful in the avoidance of jar on the needle at the point of sudden passage from piano to fortissimo should be severely restricted. Flexibility in a vertical direction is less dangerous and is useful in overcoming strains due to inequality or buckling of records, but here also caution is needed to achieve the happy mean. Horizontal flexibility—and here I do not mean longitudinal flexibility—is the most useful of all however, as it is this quality which enables the needle to conform to some slight extent to the variations in the record track. Longitudinal flexibility is useful in combating the strain on the track due to such foolish imperfection in record manufacture as is implied in "swingers." It can do nothing, however, to overcome the change in pitch due to the changes in linear speed consequent thereon.

I have said sufficient, I hope, to show that though the use of rubber-necks or some mechanical equivalent, is very desirable (I have used them now continuously for over five years), they are not for those who think it too much trouble to treat

a gramophone as intelligently as one should any instrument of a more or less scientific and delicate construction.

In conclusion, I may say that we are not likely to escape the defects of the mechanically unsound methods at present employed in recording until such time as some bright genius comes along who will give us the power of reproducing records made through the agency of light or electricity without the intervention of that muddy medium, wax. Even this latter medium could, however, be called upon to do far greater justice to our musical geniuses than it does at present. It is all a question of pounds, shillings, and pence. When the public realise what could be done, they will demand a record made at an effective and constant speed and in such form as will enable them to listen to the *Unfinished* without the catastrophe of those dreadful breaks. At the risk of repeating myself, I must again emphasise the fact that such a consummation is possible here and now.

C. BALMAIN.



### The Publicity Competition

As was announced last month, the problem of this competition was referred to three adjudicators—the editor of the *Music Teacher*, the editor of *John o' London's Weekly*, and, as a representative of our readers, Mr. C. E. Hanbury, of Banbury, Oxfordshire. Since all three agreed with the Editor's own feeling in the matter, he has no other course open than to declare the competition null and void, and to thank all the firms who so generously volunteered to swell the prize list.

\* \* \*

### The Pachmann Competition

As no one shows any signs of winning this competition, in spite of several gallant attempts, we will declare this competition closed also, and will give for the entertainment of readers who have the Pachmann record of the *Nocturne in B major* (H.M.V., DB.859) the words muttered by the great man as supplied to us by the Gramophone Co. They are as follows: "Begins. . . . Now the young people come to his farm, to his house. . . . Knocks. . . . Chopin was afraid. . . . Begins to cry. . . . Two knocks again. . . . The door is shut. . . . This time hard in this case. . . . Now two knocks more and is finished."

But is it really "come to his farm"?

Fill up the Lifebelt Coupon on page xl.

# SOME COMPARISONS OF SONG RECORDS

By JON DE YONG

**S**ONG records—not opera records. Singing opera is a very different thing from singing songs. It is usually facilely compared to the difference between oil paintings and water colours, but that is a very superficial analogy. In truth there are many differences. Operatic singing is always dramatic representation. Song singing is usually suggestive rather than representative. It sings *about* some mood possibly, rather than portrays it. A song is also more compact. It has got to be weighed up and balanced by a singer as a whole. In this sense it has a definite form musically. It also has the definite literary form of the poem which is its *raison d'être*. That is, for me, the fundamental fact in songs. They are poems. If the poem is of no account in a song, it becomes a piece of vocal music, good or bad, as the case may be, but it ceases to be a song. It is from this point of view that I shall discuss a series of song records. I have chosen songs that have been recorded by a number of different singers, and by comparing their individual style I shall hope to arrive at some standard of appreciation which may be of use to gramophonists.

## IN SUMMERTIME ON BREEDON.

There are three records of Graham Peel's setting of this fragment of Housman's *Shropshire Lad*.

- No. 1. Columbia L.1191.
- No. 2. Columbia 598.
- No. 3. H.M.V. B.1957.

The three records present very striking differences in interpretation.

No. 1 is a good piece of singing; No. 2 is a poor interpretation; No. 3 is even worse; but in all cases I think the singers have missed an essential point about the poem—it is retrospective. This is characteristic of most of the *Shropshire Lad*. It is nearly all retrospective and not a little morbid. In the fragment in question the whole tone is set by the last three stanzas, but it is not only they but also the first four stanzas which are tragic. Although speaking of happiness at the beginning of the song, it is a happiness that is past and the tone of recollection is a deeply melancholy one. Now, it is only in the first record that I can detect this note in the opening of the song. Mr. Gervase Elwes infuses into his tone a certain tragedy from the very beginning. I feel, myself, that it might have been more marked and that a slightly

moderated tempo would have helped the impression; but I do not insist that I am right, for I know that many do not agree and find the interpretation quite satisfying. It is certainly a beautifully sung record. There is a delightful directness in the style. An entire absence of vulgarity and mannerisms, and beautiful diction. One can hear every word and not a single one is mispronounced. Not only that, but the singer makes his words carry forward the melody with a simplicity that is impressive. None of his rubatos are over-stressed nor are his changes of tone exaggerated. Note his treatment of "and stole out unbeknown" and "but here my love would stay." These are both places where the unimaginative singer would do nothing or the vulgarian too much. His climax, too, is quite admirable and might with advantage be compared with those of the other records in question.

In No. 2 the effect is invertebrate. The singer stays too long on the word "be" and makes no point of "dumb." His tone on "Oh! noisy bells" is insignificant and carries no note of command. Mr. Elwes is magnificent at this point. His tone is thrilling and he comes down on "dumb" with fine authority.

No. 3, on the other hand, is deplorable. The singer has exaggerated his effects almost to ridicule. The phrase is half recited and half sung with the result that the border-line between tragedy and farce is passed and one has more desire to snigger than weep. He uses this particular recitation effect several times during the song. Notably at "my" in the second line, fifth verse. The interpretation is a triumph of ineptitude on which the clipt coyness of "up" puts the finishing touch. The diction is exaggerated all the way through, with the result that the atmosphere at the opening is like that of some quasi-military marching song. It is full of that inane virility affected by deficient who sing about Devonshire cream and cider. This is partly due to the speed, which is very fast at the opening and too slow when it changes at the fifth verse. The tempo of No. 2, on the other hand, starts much too slowly with the result that at the fifth verse and onwards it loses all movement and the melody falls to bits. The singer has a beautiful voice, but he seems to be content to leave it at that. He is not successful at recreating the atmosphere of the poem to any extent. That should be the primary aim in singing a song. As long as it is

looked on as merely a vehicle for vocal tone very little value can be attached to the interpretation. In listening to this record one has the suspicion that the singer was more concerned to show an even tonal line and colour than he was to let us hear him sing a poem. If so, he chose the wrong vehicle. There are plenty of bits of music which he could have chosen where the poem is of no significance at all, but this is not one of them. His diction is good but quite unimaginative; in the last word of the last line of the first verse the vowel sound is pinched with unpleasant effect. Elsewhere he makes the same vowel perfectly well. His "r's" are not exaggerated, and compare favourably with those in No. 3. He sings one or two wrong notes.

There is another singing point of interest in these records. The opening phrase of the song is one that is repeated in various forms all through. It is a rising and falling phrase, and the singers have succumbed to the vocal temptation of this and made a crescendo up to the top note nearly every time it occurs. In most cases this is not required by the poem, and as that is the first consideration, a vocal effect, for its own sake, is not in place in a song of this type, and should have been avoided.

It is, by the way, very interesting to compare Vaughan Williams' setting of this poem. It is out of his *Wenlock Edge* cycle and is sung by Gervase Elwes. It is a very fine song but, although I know it is heresy to say so, I find the singing dull and almost monotonous. Musically, it is as different from Peel's setting as could well be imagined, being thoroughly modern in tone against the other's complete conventionality. I should hesitate to say, however, that it is a better song. In my opinion both are good and both successful in their own way, and the two Elwes records are worth possessing.

#### SAPPHISCHE ODE.

I have heard seven records of Brahms' *Sapphische Ode*, three by sopranos and four by contraltos.

- No. 1. Polydor 79533.
- No. 2. Polydor 85299.
- No. 3. Vocalion A.0220.
- No. 4. H.M.V. DA.597.
- No. 5. Polydor 72714.
- No. 6. Polydor 70549.
- No. 7. H.M.V. DA.525.

This song, the poem of which is by H. Schmidts, is remarkable for the length and suavity of its phrases. It is, in consequence, extremely difficult to sing. It was written in a low key and is usually looked on as a contralto song. But contraltos being what they are, it is not surprising to find that out of these seven records the three best are listed as sopranos. I say "listed" because Nos. 1

and 3 have more of a mezzo than a soprano tone and No. 2 only is a pure soprano, though a very light one indeed. These three records are not only more artistically sung but technically better sung as well. The singer in No. 4, for instance, hardly ever begins a phrase which starts with a consonant without putting an extra syllable in front of it. This is particularly noticeable in the last phrase of both verses, where, in front of the two first words she makes a noise something between a gasp and a hiccup. This is due to starting the vowel tone in the larynx before the attacking consonant on the tip of the tongue or lips. It is the consonant which should introduce the vowel tone and not vice versa. I do not know whether this particular fault is chronic with contraltos, but it certainly intensifies the yearning and booming which usually assist in their artistic downfall. Three of the contraltos in question here do it, while not one of the sopranos is guilty. Just what one would expect. No. 5, however, is an exception, for she only does it once or twice very faintly in the whole song and her interpretation is very good. It is much the finest record of the four contraltos and contains some very fine singing. It is sung by Sigrid Onegin. I have never heard her on the concert platform, but after hearing this record, I shall certainly take the first opportunity I have of doing so.

No. 1 is sung by Julia Culp and it is, in my opinion, the finest of the seven. I cannot find a single blemish in it. It is neither too fast nor too slow and yet she is able to take the opening phrase in one breath. The only other singer who is able to do this is Frieda Hempel in No. 2. It adds enormously to the value of the interpretation, for it is extremely difficult to retain the rhythmic pulse in such long phrases and if they can be sung in one breath the singer is at a great advantage in attaining that objective. Julia Culp brings this off very well. At no place does the rhythm fall to bits, nor is her power of sustaining tone lacking at any moment. Her diction is very good; the words are clear all through and no extra syllables have crept in unawares. Her attack is wonderful. To see how good it is, compare the first word of the third phrase in each verse with the same words in No. 4, or the first word in the first phrase, second verse, or the last word of the second phrase, second verse. No. 4 is in fact made by a famous English contralto, but I am sorry to say it compares very unfavourably with either No. 1 or No. 5 which are both made by Germans. It is not even as good as No. 6 which is by a foreign singer and contains a large number of faults in style. The worst fault is the swooping from note to note which is particularly noticeable in the third phrase, first verse, and in the first word of the second verse produces a noise exactly like someone who has been unexpectedly pinched

and cries out "Ouch!" This singer, in common with No. 4, sounds as though she were much more concerned with demonstrating the depth of her chest notes than in singing a poem. Her style may be suitable for opera, but not, I think, for *lieder*. Her singing of *Auf dem Kirchhofe* on the reverse side of the record rather supports this view. It is certainly a fine voice but in interpretation seems somewhat at sea and lacking in significance in diction.

No. 2 has an amazing charm of its own. Strictly speaking, Hempel's voice is too high and not heavy enough for this song, but she compensates for this by the extraordinary clarity and sweetness of the tone. I feel I should require the pen of a poet to do justice to the opening of the third phrase in each verse. The attack is beautiful and then each following note falls like a crystal drop. Banal though it may be, the word "limpid" is forced from me. I find it the most truly limpid tone it has ever been my joy to hear. Her breath control and diction are perfect and there is a charming simplicity of style which is quite captivating. Except for a slight explosion on the last syllable of the first verse I can find no fault at all. There is no error in intonation. The whole thing is to be accepted, as a modern philosopher says, "with natural piety." Having said which I will add that the song on the other side of the record is not worthy of her, but anyone who enjoys coloratura will find it a very good example.

No. 3 is sung by Elena Gerhardt and is a disappointment. I have always admired the remarkable way in which this singer is able to lengthen

out a phrase without destroying its rhythm, but somehow or other this doesn't seem to "get over" on the record. She sings the song too slowly and apparently with too much rubato. Not only that, but her attack is noticeably poor. Note the beginning of the third phrase in both verses. I was amazed to hear this, as it is so completely at variance with what I have heard her do on the platform. She is a very great artist indeed, but almost the only part of her artistry which is left intact is her diction. The whole production of her voice depends on her words and is unusually clear and pertinent. Every word means something and every vowel is pure and undefiled. From this point of view this is a fine record and would be of great use to a singer studying diction. Note, for instance, the vowel sounds in the words of the first line and then compare them with the same vowels in No. 4, particularly the words "am dunklen hage." In the one they are perfect, in the other slightly bastardised or dulled. The difference may at first sound trivial, but it shows, on the one hand, real attention to the meaning of what is being sung, and on the other, just the slight lack of intelligence which so often makes songs dull to listen to. Gerhardt is never dull to listen to because she knows what she is singing about and she sings because she has something to sing about. There is no other excuse for singing a song.

Polydor records come very well out of this comparison. They are four out of the seven and three of them are very good indeed. They would form a notable addition to anybody's library.

## THE NATIONAL BAND FESTIVAL

GRAMOPHONISTS who enjoy records of good brass bands can justly be proud of their taste. The brass band provides what is perhaps the most sporting, energetic, and enthusiastic part of the musical world. The standard of playing among first-class brass bands is very high, and, for precision and polish, rivals the American symphony orchestra. The National Band Festival at the Crystal Palace has just celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary under the founder, Mr. J. Henry Iles. No-one who has attended the festival can have failed to notice the enthusiasm of the occasion. The true communistic spirit is very evident, and many supporters, paying their own expenses, travel all night to cheer next day their local band to its best efforts. Very often the mayor and corporation will turn out to welcome home a victorious band. Oh, for some of this spirit in other musical affairs! The brass band movement is surely the direct spiritual descendant of Tudor and Elizabethan musical England.

Since 1913 the championship test piece at the Crystal Palace has been an original composition for brass bands. A hearing of these is part of a knowledge of modern English musical history. They have all been preserved on gramophone records made by famous contesting bands. The following are the titles (with dates) to look for in Beltona, Regal, Winner, and other catalogues that keep up with brass band development:—

Tone poem, *Labour and Love* (Percy Fletcher), 1913.  
Tone poem, *Coriolanus* (Cyril Jenkins), 1920.

Tone poem, *Life Divine* (Cyril Jenkins), 1921.

Symphony, *Freedom* (Hubert Bath), 1922.

Overture, *Oliver Cromwell* (Henry E. Geehl), 1923.

Rhapsody, *On the Cornish Coast* (Henry E. Geehl), 1924

Overture, *Joan of Arc* (Denis Wright), 1925.

In addition to the above, Prof. Granville Bantock's *Kubla Khan* was published in 1922. Denis Wright, a pupil of Stanford, won an open competition with his *Joan of Arc*, the analytical notes of which were written by the present writer for the contest day number (Sept. 26th) of the *British Bandsman*, the organ both of the festival and the publishers of the test pieces. Marsden Colliery won the championship for the first time in their career. A recording of their rendering is certain. Irwell Springs were second, South Moor third, and Carlton Main fourth. Records by St. Hilda Colliery, Foden's Motor Works, Callender's Cable Works, Horwich R.M.I., and Black Dyke Mills will all be good. Berlioz' *Faust* selection was one of the junior section test pieces, *Songs of Old Wales* being the other. *Life Divine* was revived for the grand shield section, which was won by Carlisle St. Stephens.

Apropos of the defence of Meyerbeer by Herman Klein and the Editor, it may be remarked that we in the brass band world have long backed *Les Huguenots* as fine music, and the excellent selection is a favourite test piece. Brass bands have certainly kept Meyerbeer and Bellini (*I Puritani* selection) alive in one part of English musical affairs. I think records are available.

JOHN F. PORTE.

# ARMCHAIR PHONATICS

By P. WILSON

## VII.—The Flexible Connector

IN the issue for October, 1924, I gave a number of reasons for thinking that record wear would be diminished if the needle had a certain amount of flexibility in the plane of the diaphragm. I argued that the needle was receiving impulses from the record in more than one direction, that the diaphragm could only absorb impulses in a direction perpendicular to itself, and that the others were spending themselves in damaging the record. The facts in support of this argument are much stronger than I realised at the time, but even then I was so convinced of their force that I set to work to devise a stylus which should be flexible in the plane of the diaphragm and rigid at right angles to it, and even went so far as to make application for a patent covering certain methods of achieving that object. At first my experiments were most encouraging. I found that I could get tympani, triangles, glockenspiels, and several other effects which I had hitherto been missing. But it was not long before I realised that to get these results I was sacrificing brilliance and life. I struggled hard to overcome the difficulty, but was ultimately forced to the conclusion that my methods altered the mass and the balance of the stylus too much. It was at about that time that I met Mr. Virtz and learned how important the design and balance of the stylus and the workmanship put into it really could be. Before then I had been definitely against fibre needles. I realised that they preserved records from wear, but was (and still am) of opinion that this immunity could be purchased at too great a price. The first sound box Mr. Virtz made for me not only persuaded me that I need not pay any other price than that of volume but gave me a far superior quality of reproduction than I had achieved before. I abandoned my patent application and my experiments on flexibility without the slightest compunction.

At Easter, 1925, the Editor asked me to go to Jethou to try out a new gadget which had been sent to him. By that time I had come to mistrust memory as a sole method of judging quality of reproduction, especially with records I knew well. It is so easy to be attracted by a sound box or machine which gives new effects and to supply from your memory the qualities in which it is lacking. I had been caught more than once by that and had only discovered my error when I compared the results on records I did not know. When I am specially intent on some particular form of experiment, I am sometimes caught in this trap even now,

but the knowledge that the trap exists usually enables me to extricate myself before it is too late. As a safeguard I have gradually been compiling a list of points in records where gramophones usually fail, and on this occasion I took my list, as it was then, down to Jethou with me. Mr. Mackenzie had said that the gadget made good records better and bad records worse, and that on his Balmain the effect was marvellous. This was all to the good, but I confess I was very sceptical. I had heard the office Balmain on many occasions and had come to regard it much as the little boy whom Tony Weller mentions had regarded the alphabet. I thought the reproduction very good, but was satisfied that I could get better results in my own home. I wondered, then, whether this new affair was just another sign of growing pains.

I was soon undeceived. The first record was not very impressive, though I had to confess that I had never been altogether satisfied with the opening of the Columbia *Seventh Symphony*. The second movement is a much better test of reproduction, and I had hoped to hear that. However, after the somewhat hectic discussion of the first record, we proceeded with the Columbia *Eroica*. From that point my scepticism gradually wore down. All my "spot points" were mastered with ease. The weakest feature, I thought, was the string tone, but even there the results were greatly superior to any that I had ever heard with a No. 2 box. Generally speaking, No. 2 boxes are not very successful with strings, but then, very few boxes are. I had taken my Virtz box with me, but it was not happy on the Balmain. It had been tuned for use with fibres on a H.M.V. horn model. I have never found fibres go well on the Balmain and for steel needles the box was too "sharp." Its one outstanding success was with the Vocalion record of Schumann's *Quintet*. Mr. Mackenzie was inclined to regard this success as illegitimate, simply, I suppose, because his No. 2 was not so successful. But that view I think he has since revised.

I was at Jethou for five days, and during that time we played some hundreds of records. We compared the "happy combination" with Mr. Mackenzie's other instruments, but . . . there was no comparison. We tried a new No. 2 box which had been specially brought down, but it was of very poor quality when ranged alongside his own. We had three separate "Lifebelts," identical to all outward appearance, but one of the three gave much superior results to the

others. It became clear that the elastic quality of the rubber was of great importance. The Lifebelt improved the reproduction of each one of the machines, but with the horizontal grand the difference was not very substantial. I have since had an opportunity of examining the "innards" of an instrument of that model and am not surprised at our failure. They remind me of a popular quotation from Dante: "Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch'entrate."

I came home with a resolve to resume my old experiments and to trace so far as I could what the effects of flexibility are. The features that had particularly impressed me at Jethou were resonance, and resolving power. I had never heard the bass instruments so resonant and so well distinguished from each other; and that without appreciable loss in the upper register. In some records one could even hear separately the tubas which had been used to reinforce the double basses. The general effect was one which could not be mistaken; it got me in the solar plexus every time. But I was not sure how far the result was due to the surroundings. Mr. Mackenzie plays his gramophone in ideal conditions. He has sea air and a quiet island with no interruptions from trains and buses. The gramophone is in one room and you listen to it in the next and the walls of both rooms are lined with pitch pine. Certainly the description "happy combination" was aptly chosen.

My own experiments have now lasted some six months and have produced some most interesting results. Before I go on to discuss the principles involved, it would be well to state in categorical form some of the conclusions to which I have been led. I have checked these conclusions as far as possible by special experiments, but the work has been very onerous and my leisure hours all too few for the task. I should be glad if readers would inform me of the results of any experiments which they may make.

(1) The Lifebelt is most effective on very forward machines with long amplifying systems. With machines which are already backward flexibility does add a little resonance, but rubber can't add "punch."

(2) Similarly the improvement is more marked with steel needles than with fibres. This seems to be part of the same principle as (1). The general tendency is for steel needles to give too incisive a tone and for fibres to give too broad a tone. I got a marked improvement with steel needles straight way, but with fibres the difficulty was that although resolving power was increased the reproduction lost some of its life. I feel sure that I have now overcome this difficulty, but my experiments in this respect are not yet finished. On one thing I am quite clear: with a fibre needle less flexibility is required than with a steel needle. This is no doubt due to the fact that a fibre tracks vertically in the groove.

(3) The improvement with the ordinary sound-box of commerce is proportionately greater than it is with a specially tuned box, though, of course, absolutely the results are never so good. With a box specially tuned for one type of record the most marked improvement is on types of record for which the sound-box has not been specially tuned.

(4) The elastic properties of the rubber and the shape of the tube are important. There is reason to think that, in the ideal, different makes (and probably also different types) of record require different qualities of flexibility. Mr. Mackenzie and I have tried tubes of varying quality and have picked out that which seems to give the best all-round results. What its particular virtue is I confess I don't know.

(5) It is an advantage to have a light weight on the record so that the needle strokes the record and is not pressed heavily down upon it. Readers who have goose neck machines will probably find some advantage in fixing the goose neck by means of a rubber washer under the head of the screw which fastens it to the tone arm. The neck should be fixed in such a position that the needle is about one-eighth to one-quarter of an inch below the surface of the record and has to be lifted on to the record against the pressure of the Lifebelt. Any up and down motion due to inequalities in the turn-table or record is taken up by the Lifebelt.

(6) The needle angle must be steep. Anything less than  $60^\circ$  is a positive disadvantage.

(7) The alignment with the Lifebelt in position should be slightly under corrected; that is to say, the face of the sound-box should point in a direction slightly to the left of the tangent to the groove. If the alignment is tested by means of the Protractor the pointer should always be to the right of the zero mark. The flexibility of the Lifebelt will be sufficient to correct a slight error in this direction. The use of the Lifebelt will improve the alignment of nearly every existing machine.

(8) If the Lifebelt is properly fixed it will reduce record wear even with loud steel needles to very small proportions. As a test, see how long a fibre needle will stand up. In the September issue I mentioned that for one of my adjustments a soft fibre lasted forty sides. That was when I was using the Lifebelt in the manner indicated in note (5) above. Adjust the amount by which the tube overlaps the end of the tone arm, the position of the ring on the outside of the tube and the length of the adapter inside the tube in accordance with the results of your tests. But be careful not to let the back of the sound-box touch the rubber.

If the record is already badly worn the results will not be at all satisfactory. The needle will stick in the groove at worn places and will be dragged along by it, to be released when the resistance of the tube is sufficiently strong.

P. WILSON.

(To be continued.)

## THE FORUM

*The following articles are unsolicited contributions from readers, dealing with this or that aspect of the gramophone to which each has given thought. A selection from the MSS. received is published every month, and prizes are offered every quarter. Articles should not exceed 1,500 words, and should be typewritten or written very legibly on one side only of the paper. They should be sent to THE GRAMOPHONE, 58, Frith Street, London, W.1., marked "The Forum": and a stamped and addressed envelope should be enclosed.*

This month completes the second quarter since The Forum was started (omitting August), and readers are now asked to register their votes by stating on a postcard the three articles in The Forum of the September, October and November numbers of "The Gramophone" which they consider worthy of rewards, in the order of preference. Post-cards should be marked "Forum," and should be sent to the above address, to reach the office before November 12th.

The First Prize will be Five Pounds, the second Three Pounds, the third Two Pounds. Records of the value of One Pound will be sent to the reader who gets the winning list; or, if many readers coincide in their preferences, the Editor's discretion in rewarding them must be accepted.



## FROM THE ÆOLIAN HARP AND THE MUSIC BOX TO THE GRAMOPHONE

By EVA MARY GREW

TO-DAY I was reminded of the now old-fashioned musical snuff-box which, for more than a hundred years, was held in highest esteem by notable as well as un-notable people, taking the place of our gramophone in the way the "magic lantern" took the place of the cinema. The hour had arrived when (neighbours having to be considered) the dignified H.M.V. and Apollo models abiding in this house must stand for awhile majestically silent; and I resumed my reading of the letters of the American writer, Henry David Thoreau, to come almost at once upon the following passage, written in the year 1843: "I think I must have some muses in my pay that I know not of, for certain musical wishes of mine are answered as soon as entertained. Last summer I went to Hawthorne's suddenly for the express purpose of borrowing his music box, and almost immediately Mrs. Hawthorne proposed to lend it to me. The other day I said I must go to Mrs. Barrett's to hear hers, and lo! straightway Richard F. sent me one for a present from Cambridge. It is a very good one. I should like to have you hear it. I shall not have to employ you to borrow for me now!"

How exactly is all this echoed nowadays! Substitute "gramophone" for "music box" and you have what a thousand persons have said or written this year, except that perhaps only a few of them have had one "sent for a present." We listen to a friend's gramophone, until we are filled with a desire to possess one of our own; obtaining it, we cannot rest until we have shown it to other friends and have fired them as we were fired, upon which their enthusiasm, soon as great as ours, drives them to the same acquisition.

Writing in 1842, Thoreau has other references to the musical box. One is: "Soon after John's death I listened to a music box, and if, at any time, that event [John's death] had seemed inconsistent with the beauty and harmony of the universe, it was then gently constrained into the placid course of nature by those steady notes, in mild and unoffended tone echoing far and wide under the heavens." This is very beautiful, and applicable to the perfect gramophone reproduction (as of that Parlophone disc containing Reichardt's song *When the Roses Bloom*, to which two writers made

eulogistic reference in the August number of THE GRAMOPHONE), however much the cynic may point out that some of the gramophone sounds which float about the countryside are, to say the least, scarcely examples of mild and unoffended tone.

The musical box was called the snuff-box, because the first specimens, made about the year 1800, looked very much like a snuff-box, and were quite as small. By the end of the nineteenth century about 30,000 of the instruments were made every year, mostly in Switzerland, and sold at prices ranging from 30s. to £50. Some of these reproduced between 30 and 40 tunes, and ran for an hour and a half without stopping or calling for rewinding—a condition of affairs we gramophonists would welcome. Since 1900 the gramophone must have more or less destroyed the musical-box industry.

I remember how, in the days of my childhood, I was occasionally invited as a very special treat to listen to mysteriously delicate sounds emanating from a photograph album. When visitors called, or when I was to receive the promised reward for being a good little girl, a key was turned in the album, where the musical box was inserted to a false back, and we were invited to gaze on pictures of Great-aunt Jane in a crinoline and highly severe face, and on old Uncle Sam in peg-top trousers and semi-circle of whisker (upper lip, chin, and cheeks shaved clean), who likewise had a highly severe face, though with the suspicion of a twinkle in the eyes and the suggestion of a humorous twitch in the corners of the mouth, while the musical box tinkled out the recently inserted airs of the day, as *Two Little Girls in Blue*, *Sweet Marie*, a Moody and Sankey hymn-tune, or that everlasting *Snuff-Box Waltz*, famous since the time when William IV. sat on the throne worrying about the clamour for constitutional reform.

There was only this musical box in a photo album in those days of my early youth. Edison's "phonograph," however, existed already, as a sort of showman's curiosity. In great-grandfather's time there was not even the musical box, but only the Æolian harp, which we never see to-day, though its effects are sometimes very slightly perceptible when telegraph wires are moved by the wind.

This harp of *Æolus*, god of the wind, must have been a very lovely thing. It had a dozen strings of catgut, of different thicknesses, but all tuned to the same note. The strings were kept slack, so that they gave out practically no sound when plucked by the finger. The case was fixed in an open window, and when the breeze struck across the strings they vibrated sectionally, giving out notes of changing pitch according to the force of the wind and the thickness of the individual string. Writers tell us, and scientists confirm the statement, that the notes were the purest and the most perfectly in tune of all possible sounds. When a strong gust of air swept the strings, the "segmental vibrations" became shorter and shorter, producing notes not known in our musical harmonic systems, until extreme dissonances were formed, and the music wailed, shrieked, and howled in most eerie manner, returning to ethereal effects again as the power of the wind subsided, evoking

Such a soft floating witchery of sound  
As twilight elfins make, when they at eve  
Voyage on gentle gales from Fairyland

as Coleridge expresses it in his poem called "The *Æolian Harp*."

What a wonder will be in the world when our gramophone is tonally as perfect as the *Æolian harp*! I have heard the Lener Quartet in great and small concert rooms, and have fancied that the players must surely be very nearly as ideal in their accord as this natural instrument; and then I have dreamed of such perfection transferred in all types of music to the gramophone. A future day will see this achievement, and our future Coleridges and Thoreaus will then write finely of the gramophone as they wrote of their *Æolian*

harps and musical boxes. Indeed, they will write more finely; for their subject will not be formless sounds, as in the case of the harp, or little tinkling tunes, but mighty creations like the *Choral Symphony* of Beethoven and the *Violin Sonata* of César Franck, and intense utterances of actual human beings in moment of extreme emotion, as the songs of *Parsifal* rendered by a Lauritz Melchior.

I suppose that with this devoutly-to-be-wished consummation will come the equal perfecting of the broadcast music, which (so far as I have experience of listening-in) is at present far less beautiful than ordinarily good "gramophoning." Then, what with gramophones and the wireless, and it may be the perfected player-piano, all nations may have the opportunity of becoming ideally musical as the Greeks, by their mode of life, had the opportunity—physical deficiencies apart—of becoming ideally lovely, graceful and athletic. Already the world's atmosphere is perpetually filled with sound that speeds like the Puck of "Midsummer Night's Dream," but infinitely faster, around the world, and we can no longer say with Coleridge that

the mute still air,  
Is Music slumbering on her instrument—  
seeing that the air is not thus mute and asleep.

Yet I believe that it is the gramophone which will ever lead in that long journey we have taken in so short a time from the *Æolian harp* and the music box to our present-day varieties of "canned music," as Dr. Frank Damrosch was pleased to term it a few weeks ago to musical students in New York, because the gramophone affords us exactly what we want in the very moment when we are wanting it, which is when it does us most good.

EVA MARY GREW.



## OUR HOBBY

AM going to make a statement. There are three hobbies: Stamp collecting, gramophony, and "wireless." Their order of importance may be as above, that is the individual

or collective opinion of their followers, but only out of the first can money be made, therefore it must occupy with wireless the joint position of being more selfish than the second. The feeling of exultation at an "error" or a variation of colour cannot easily be transmitted to a number of persons, especially collectively, whilst at present no one can supply his own wireless programme, which is a further illustration of selfishness, albeit involuntary, and leaves "our" hobby on a pinnacle as one of the most sociable in existence, especially when nowadays it is possible to entertain (often with impunity), by means of the gramophone, persons of widely varied musical tastes. Who has not been invited to an "At Home" where most of the other guests are bored to death, principally because they know what is coming in the way of vocal or instrumental efforts?

In the case of the gramophone there is a delightful element of anticipation, and often of surprise, available, and thus it falls to its lot to play the part of a missionary in converting many a stony breast.

So far, in the realm of hobbies, I have not mentioned fowls nor white mice, because the further one delves therein the more apparent does their singleness of purpose appear; one can show these to friends or fellow keepers, but one cannot so well explain their functions. Books can certainly be lent, but to be read individually. Collective reading is out of the question, and collective listening is out of fashion, so that the niche which the gramophone fills is particularly distinguished. This social feature of the gramophone was never more apparent than it is to-day, where it is brought into requisition on every possible occasion, and, in spite of

those who affirm that music-making is on the wane, provides a far surer way to a development of musical temperament than almost any other medium.

In this connection it is well to consider the part taken by gramophone societies in helping to foster the cult, and it is perhaps a peculiar and significant sign that the movement should be confined exclusively to this country, which, a pioneer in practically everything, appears to have asserted once again its genius for fastening upon a feature of normal life in connection with the formation of a club. And yet it is the ordinary man who is responsible for this, just as it is he who supports the gramophone industry. We have thus fared some distance from the cut-and-dried systems of years gone by and have arrived at an epoch when the desires and aspirations of the user, the consumer, have come within a measurable distance of receiving respect where this is not already accorded, and when the journals devoted to the gramophone and the Press generally have found an added scope for their activity in the department to which their energies are devoted.

We are more and more brought into contact with the art and practice of recording, and are the better able to contrast present-day conditions with those prevailing within the last ten or fifteen years. Many a devotee must of necessity recall from time to time his first excursion into the charmed circle; charming then as a first tentative experience of an apparent miracle, and, in spite of the lapse of years, still charming to-day, when the field of endeavour is so much wider, scientific achievements so much greater, and one's whole musical outlook broadened through the medium of what still remains, in the face of detractors, one of the wonders of the age.

One is able to look back to that magic moment when the

very first records were brought home, to say nothing of the first instrument, both purchased perhaps without much thought beyond their potential usefulness as toys, and the realisation that, single-handed, one could produce sounds, and even real music; the latter perhaps qualified to some extent as one progressed, but nevertheless a seed destined for some wonderful maturity.

Thus one's first connection with the gramophone in the majority of instances never altogether fades, and, if in the larger scope that is its to-day, and among the comparatively unending stream of new things that is poured out, we are apt to forget the humble beginnings. A hunting-out of old well-worn discs is calculated to have a salutary effect, and to

remind us that in the very beginning of our apprenticeship, these self-same records that are more often found in out-of-the-way corners exercised as much fascination over our simple minds as any that we may have possessed since.

So it is thus due to the gradual evolution of taste and a widening of sympathy and knowledge due primarily to an intelligent use of the gramophone, that many a neophyte has had the inestimable privilege, dimly perceived perhaps at the time; and through subsequent development, of the gradual unfolding of heavenly doors and a realisation of the beauties beyond, that will last a lifetime and become the means of solace and enlightenment.

S. F. D. HOWARTH.



## A CELEBRITY MINSTREL CONCERT By "SCRUTATOR"

I HAD better warn off at once all high-brows, cubists, musical critics, vorticists, long-haired men, futurists, wild women, and all other "padded cell" members of the great gramophone fraternity; this article is not for them; it is written for my old friends, the middle classes, who, like myself, are able to enjoy music in many forms without losing their tempers; and, let it be at once stated, are not ashamed to own that there is something within them to which the idea of "nigger minstrels" still appeals.

It is a great comfort to me that the leading artists very steadfastly refuse to take the slightest notice of the musical critics, and continue, either on their records or at their concerts, to endeavour to give pleasure to their listeners, and most of them have condescended to play or sing for the gramophone those items which by experience they know have given pleasure to millions, not of absolute necessity for mercenary reasons, as a cheerful writer in the recent "Hempel and Galli-Curci" correspondence so charmingly suggested, but very probably because they know it does give pleasure.

In choosing the programme for a "Celebrity Minstrel Concert," one instinctively turns to Alma Gluck and her famous quartet for the principal items. I was amused, in the recent review of her records, to find that as I had, I may say, quite anticipated, the line of affectation usually adopted by our reviewers was followed, and the four songs of this talented artist which without possible controversy have given most pleasure to thousands (especially old people) were placed last. The old plantation melodies have never been sung as she sings them, and *My Old Kentucky Home*, *Carry me back to old Virginny*, *Old Black Joe*, and *Aloha Oe* form a very important part of my programme. The mere fact that they are popular is, of course, sufficient reason why they should appear at the bottom of her record review.

A selection of negro spirituals would be necessary, and for

these I enlist the services of that past master in this art, Roland Hayes, including *Sit down, Go down, Moses*, *By and By*, and *Steal away*, which, issued by the Vocalion Co. at 3s. for double-sided records are not the least of the astonishing bargains contained in their list.

The De Reszke Singers and the Gresham Singers could be called upon for quartets of plantation melodies and negro spirituals. The "banjo solos" I should hand over to Kreisler and Zimbalist, the former playing Dvorák's *Humoresque* and *An Indian Lament*, while the latter, with string orchestra, would give us *Massa's in de cold, cold ground* and *Old Black Joe*.

The Hallé Orchestra would be called upon for *From the New World* suite by Dvorák (one has to turn to Dvorák for the instrumental items), and the Lener Quartet would render in their inimitable style, the *Lento* from the *Nigger Quartet* by the same composer. Galli-Curci could once more set the critics and others mentioned at the commencement by the ears with *Ol' Carolina* and *Swanee River*, while Julia Culp would oblige with two of Lieurance's beautiful and fascinating Indian love songs, *By the Waters of Minnetonka* and *Lullaby*. Alma Gluck would also give us her version of *Old Folks at Home*, to which her husband, Zimbalist, contributes a charming violin *obbligato* of Dvorák's *Humoresque*.

Lively orchestral pieces such as *Lubly Lulu* and *Fifinette* by Percy Fletcher, *Hobomoko* (an Indian romance) by Reeves, and *Le Long du Missouri* could be interspersed.

It will be observed that the "comic" element is omitted entirely, but this could be readily provided by some of the Coldstream Guards selections, introducing sand dances, songs and patter. The whole forming a programme which would give delight to the majority of people of average musical taste and mentality—in fact, to everybody outside the limits of the first paragraph!



## GILBERT OR SULLIVAN—WHICH? By L. B. NEAL

WHEN the Gilbert and Sullivan operas were first produced, it was Gilbert who created the public interest in them. His humour was quite different from anything which had gone before, and his complete mastery of stagecraft was a revelation to people who had come to regard the comic opera as a branch of the drama in which the finer points of dramatic art no longer existed. All this was changed by Gilbert. He raised the technique of comic opera to a height never reached before or since.

This does not imply that Sullivan's tunes had no part in

the making of their initial successes, which they had, but at that time their full value was not realised and they merely appeared as a perfect accompaniment to Gilbert's flowing metres. It was Gilbert's satire, always biting, but never cruel, and his whimsical ideas which made people realise that something new had at last arrived.

The critics enjoyed the music, but they had no idea of the lasting classical qualities of the tunes when they called Sullivan the "English Offenbach."

Then came the passing of the Savoy and all that it meant.

For ten years the operas were not heard in London. Did people forget them? No, they remembered them by their tunes—the tunes which had always been popular, but which people now saw had upheld the memory of the operas.

Then came the 1919 revivals. Everyone remembered the tunes, but this time people realised their full worth. Here were classical tunes which would never die, and which were as fresh and new as ever they had been—the true test of classicism. But what of the librettist? Gilbert had been forgotten for ten years. His books would be out of date, his humour stale, and his satire feeble. Imagine, then, the general rejoicing when it was found that Gilbert was as young and as fresh as Sullivan, that the humour was more delicious than ever, that the lyrics were supreme and that the satire had

not lost the least bit of sting. The public again found exquisite relief in these operas after many years of stagnant musical comedy, and now a new Gilbert and Sullivan public has been created, a public who adore both sides of the operas, words and music, but a public whose adoration was won back again by the tunes. It is safe to say that this new public has come to know and love Gilbert by knowing and loving Sullivan first. It was Sullivan then who kept Gilbert alive during the dark years, when his great work was in danger of being forgotten.

The majority of the operas are known far and wide by their tunes, and it is primarily their tunes which have made them the greatest creations for the comic opera stage for all time.

Sullivan thus earns the right of being hailed as the greater collaborator.

L. B. NEAL.



## THE GRAMOPHONE AS A MEMBER OF THE ORCHESTRA

By W. A. CHISLETT

*With ioyes the Nightingal gan rayse  
Her right recorded song.*  
Howell (1568).

THE inevitable has happened again! At the Leeds Triennial Festival last month was heard the first English performance of Respighi's *The Pine Trees of Rome* (composed in 1924) in which the gramophone is given a part in the orchestra, the record used being the song of a nightingale.

We have had the suggestion of the braying of an ass in Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream Overture*, the singing of birds in many pieces, notably in Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony*, and, with still greater realism, the bleating of sheep in Strauss' *Don Quixote*, and, as the purists have shaken their heads sorrowfully over all these, what are we to expect now? At present it would be wise to keep an open mind as to the value of this music as a work of art, for this novelty in orchestration had been so widely advertised before the performance that it was almost impossible to listen to the music in such a way as to be able to give a calm and dispassionate opinion. The element of freakishness or "stunt" would persist in creeping in, and not until it has been heard again and perhaps a third time will it be possible to pass a fair and reasoned judgment.

The work, called a symphonic poem, is divided into four movements, but as it has no other similarity to the classical form of the symphony and as the music depends so largely for its effect on tone-colour and atmosphere, perhaps "mood" would be a better word to use than "movement." The miniature score contains the following notes as an indication of what is in the composer's mind:—

1. *The Pine Trees of the Villa Borghese*.—Children are at play in the pine groves of Villa Borghese; they dance round in circles, they play at soldiers, marching and fighting, they are wrought up by their own cries like swallows at evening, they come and go in swarms. Suddenly the scene changes, and—

2. *Pine Trees near a Catacomb*.—We see the shades of the pine trees fringing the entrance to a catacomb. From the depth there rises the sound of mournful psalm-singing, floating through the air like a solemn hymn, and gradually and mysteriously dispersing.

3. *The Pine Trees of the Janiculum*.—A quiver runs through the air; the pine trees of the Janiculum stand distinctly outlined in the clear light of a full moon. A nightingale is singing.

4. *The Pine Trees of the Appian Way*.—Misty dawn on the Appian Way; solitary pine trees guarding the magic landscape; the muffled, ceaseless rhythm of unending footsteps.

The poet has a fantastic vision of bygone glories; trumpets sound and, in the brilliance of the newly-risen sun, a consular army bursts forth towards the Sacred Way, mounting in triumph to the Capitol.

The gramophone record is introduced at the close of the third movement, "The Pine Trees of the Janiculum," which is a beautiful nocturne. A delightful cadenza on the clarinet leads up to the song of the nightingale for which a suitable atmosphere is provided by a delicate accompaniment on muted strings which, in the performance, except for the first two or three seconds, also served to obliterate the faint surface noise. The entry of the gramophone, having evidently been carefully rehearsed, was perfectly timed and the effect of the record itself was extraordinarily realistic.

The work as a whole is on the grand scale and is scored for an exceptional orchestra including organ, piano, and celeste, a wonderful battery of percussion instruments and six "Flicorni"—perhaps better known in this country as "Flügelhorns"—the latter parts in this performance being taken by the trumpets. That Mr. Albert Coates, who conducted, was in entire sympathy with the work was obvious, and the London Symphony Orchestra responded nobly to his efforts, particularly in the last "mood" which is a tremendously exciting march.

Ottorino Respighi was born at Bologna on the 9th July, 1879. He studied at the Liceo in his native city, and later in Russia under Rimsky-Korsakov and in Berlin under Max Bruch. In 1913 he was appointed Professor of Composition at the Royal Liceo di Santa Cecilia in Rome and since 1923 has been the Director of that Institution. He has composed several operas, none of which have been performed in England, but much of his symphonic music, including the *Dramatic Symphony* and the *Fountains of Rome*, has been performed at the Queen's Hall, London, and the Hallé concerts in Manchester, while his arrangement of Rossini's ballet, *La Boutique Fantasque*, is always one of the most popular items in a Russian ballet season.

Signor Respighi, having shown in so marked a fashion his belief in the gramophone, is it too much to hope that before long the gramophone will return the compliment? As the record used bears the H.M.V. label, it would be a gracious act by the Gramophone Company and one that would, I am sure, be appreciated by many readers of THE GRAMOPHONE if they issued *The Pine Trees of Rome* in complete form at an early date. It could be got comfortably, I think, on three double-sided records.

W. A. CHISLETT.

# GRAMOPHONE CELEBRITIES

## XIV.—Jascha Heifetz

By N. P.

JASCHA HEIFETZ was born at Vilna, Russia, on February 21st, 1901. "Music," we are told, "had, from the start, a strikingly happy effect upon him." He certainly seems to have justified his early promise of "being musical"; a promise which too often comes to nothing in spite of parental prophecy. Jascha has had three sizes of violins in his career: a quarter size at the age of three, a half size at the age of seven—when he made his first public appearance—and (this is rather reminiscent of the advertisement for Luvisca underwear), a full-size at the age of thirteen! Like Tom Pinch, the youthful violinist found it necessary (the story is a good one, even if apocryphal) to practise his instrument under the bed-clothes. That is indeed going one better than Handel who, though discovered in night attire, did not retire to bed with his clavichord! Heifetz' career, after leaving the hands of Professor Auer with whom he had studied, has been one long brilliant success; a success, founded more than anything else, upon amazing technique. Here we are faced again with the difficult problem of the prodigy's progress. Extraordinary natural gifts, as he himself allows, allied to hard work and intense application have placed him in the very front rank of his fellows. No living violinist possesses such flawless technique. But what is there besides? Cold, calm, dispassionate, he stands on the platform and performs his miracles of dexterity, displays his beauties of tone; but do we not feel slightly chilled, anxious perhaps for less mastery and more humanity. If only he would unbutton himself a bit! The prodigy is now a grown man; has he nothing to tell us?

These impressions are to some extent corrected by Heifetz records. There is certainly a hint of passion, of tenderness, as well as that detached calm, which is the player's chief characteristic, in one of his best records, *Ave Maria* and *On Wings of Song*.

The extraordinarily rich tone of his G strings lends a superficial depth of feeling to many passages on other records, but in truth Heifetz is only revelling in beautiful tone for its own sake. To some this detachment, this unemotional interpretative faculty, will seem wholly admirable; to others, only justified where the music calls for that and nothing more; as in such astounding feats of technique as the playing of the Sarasate *Dances* or the Paganini *Caprices*, which run through the whole gamut of the violin's powers. Perhaps the steely perfection of this artist is best heard in the *Finale* of Mendelssohn's *Violin Concerto*, an excellent record, though one would have preferred the proper orchestral accompaniment. There is something magical in his playing of florid music; in the feathery lightness of the bowing, the cascades of notes that pour out of the instrument, the easily encompassed harmonics and double stoppings; all these are done with effortless ease.

Heifetz does once give us a glimpse of his real self in the *Hebrew Melody* by Achron, one of his accompanists. In the writer's opinion this is easily the most beautiful of his records, both from the interpretative and recording points of view. The tune, sup-

ported by an orchestral accompaniment is surely an old Hebrew one; appealing, therefore, to immemorial racial instincts and traditions in the Jew. It does seem to have penetrated beneath the outer shell of this curious personality.



(By permission of Nicolas Murray)

### GRADED LIST OF RECORDS.

#### A.

- D.B.291.—*Hebrew Melody* (Achron) and *Concerto in D minor, Op. 22—Romance* (Wieniawski).
- D.B.283.—*On wings of song* (Mendelssohn) and *Ave Maria* (Schubert).
- D.A.244.—*Valse Bluette* (Drigo-Auer) and *Minuet* (Porpora-Kreisler).

D.B.285.—*Danza Espanola* (Sarasate) and *Introduction and Tarantelle* (Sarasate).  
 D.A.245.—*Danza Espanola* (Granados-Kreisler) and *Ungarische Tänze*—No. 1 in G minor (Brahms).  
 D.B.292.—*Rondo in G major* (Mozart-Kreisler) and *Nocturne, Op. 27, No. 2* (Chopin).  
 D.B.284.—*Gipsy Airs Nos. I. and II.* (Sarasate).  
 D.B.290.—*Ronde des Lutins* (Bazzini) and *Scherzo Tarantelle* (Wieniavski).  
 D.B.288.—*Concerto in E minor, Op. 64—Finale* (Mendelssohn) and *Berceuse, Op. 28, No. 3* (P. Juan); *Valse du Ballet Raymonde* (Glazounov).

\* \* \*

B.  
 D.B.289.—*Concerto, Op. 35—Canzonetta* (Tchaikovsky) and *Concerto in A minor—Adagio* (Goldmark).  
 D.A.596.—*Hebrew Lullaby* (Achron) and *Grand Adagio* from *Ballet Raymonde* (Glazounov).  
 D.A.241.—*Two Caprices* (Paganini-Kreisler).  
 D.A.659.—*Waltz in D* (L. Godowsky) and *Stimmung, Op. 32, No. 1* (J. Achron).  
 D.B.287.—*Symphonie Espagnol—Andante* (Lalo) and *Moto Perpetuo* (Paganini).  
 D.B.838.—*Habañera* and *Hebrew Dance*.  
 D.A.242.—*Ruins of Athens—Turkish March* and *Ruins of Athens—Chorus of Dervishes* (Beethoven).

## INTERNATIONAL CELEBRITIES

THE Gramophone Company can surely take a legitimate pride in the photograph of the front of the Albert Hall which makes a centre double page in the October number of *The Voice*. Those huge hoardings which announce the Sunday concerts for this season are practically a row of H.M.V. celebrities — McCormack, Heifetz, Gerhardt, Pachmann, Dal Monte, Friedmann, Kreisler, Tetrazzini, Elman and Hempel. Friedmann alone does not record for H.M.V. It is good for those of us who, while liking the best art that the world can give us, yet are apt to follow strange gods in the pursuit of cheapness, to be confronted now and again by this kind of reminder of the treasures in the H.M.V. catalogue, although records of Gerhardt, Pachmann, and Hempel may, of course, be found in other catalogues.

John McCormack and Frieda Hempel have been discussed in THE GRAMOPHONE, with graded lists of their records. Pachmann's earlier records were discussed on pp. 239, 281 in Vol. II.; a note on him appears in Mr. Sydney Grew's *Table Talk* on another page; while his new records have inspired our cartoonist to provide the Art Supplement for this month. Heifetz is the Gramophone Celebrity in this issue, and Gerhardt's records are discussed on pp. 394, 427 and 447 of Vol. II. Kreisler, Dal

Monte, Tetrazzini and Mischa Elman have not been the subject of special articles yet.

The International Celebrity Subscription Concerts seem to echo all over the country; and from every side come reports from our readers that they have heard this or that artist, hitherto only known to them through the gramophone. The Hempel (with Amadio the flautist) tour is in full swing. Appearing at Dundee on the 2nd of November she will go—with or without her famous 4,000 frocks—to Newcastle, Middlesbrough, Bradford, Halifax, Manchester (twice), Birmingham, and Cambridge within the month, not to mention her Albert Hall concerts on the 5th and 29th. The itinerary of Heifetz for the month is the Albert Hall on the 1st, thence to Liverpool, Dublin, Belfast, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, Newcastle, Manchester, Bradford and so southward to Eastbourne on the 27th and back to the Albert Hall on the 28th. Tetrazzini will appear at

Swindon on the 3rd, at Swansea on the 5th, then at Bristol, Liverpool, Dublin, Belfast, Glasgow and Perth, reaching Edinburgh on December 1st. Pachmann is in the middle of his tour, and readers within reach of Bristol, Eastbourne, Manchester, Torquay, Oxford, Brighton, Leicester, Nottingham, Cardiff, Hanley, Sheffield, Halifax and Bournemouth will not miss the chance of seeing and hearing him.



FRIEDA HEMPEL.

## Table-Talk

(A running commentary on matters of special interest or of particular provocation, which appear in the current numbers of THE GRAMOPHONE)

By SYDNEY GREW

### VI.—OCTOBER.

ELGAR (p. 206b).—The Editor gives a true picture of the present state of Elgar in this country. The young musicians (for example, those of the Royal College of Music) seem to think little of his music, though some of them have a good word for the *Second Symphony*, the *Enigma Variations*, and the oratorio of *The Kingdom*. These young musicians, who are typical of the new generation, think little of Beethoven likewise. Yet it is only last year that one of the heads of Novello's—Elgar's chief publishers—remarked to me that at last the average professional newspaper critic was coming round to an understanding of his music, by which he meant coming round to an approving of it. These fluctuations, of course, are proof of the importance of the music.

With regard to Elgar's orchestration. It has been known for a long time that if orchestral performers do no more than play their notes and realise exactly the composer's dynamic directions and marks of expression, the effects he wants will be realised. This is because of his wonderful, perhaps unique, orchestral sense. Elgar has the mastery of concerted tone that a great architect has of the laws of construction; and it is likely that for twenty years he has never been surprised by hearing a passage sound differently from his calculation. Consequently his later works could hardly help recording well. The amateur, however, should not begin to train his analytical ear by means of Elgar's music, because the orchestra is so large and because the solo instruments are put to such highly individual use; also because the written score is so complex for the reader. His instrumentation should be approached through the Parlophone records of the *Haydn Surprise Symphony*, the *Beethoven No. 5*, and the *Strauss Ein Heldenleben*.

PACHMANN (215c).—Gramophonists who are trying to decipher the words uttered by de Pachmann while playing for the H.M.V. record of the Chopin *Nocturne in B major*, should remember that Pachmann generally speaks in French, and that if he begins in English he usually wanders off into the other language. No doubt he sometimes makes an ejaculation in German or Russian. More frequently, however, he makes but a fragmentary remark, completing what he wants to convey by a nod, a smile, a gesture, a grimace, or a wink. Indeed, his shrugging shoulders and winking eyes are more intelligible than his tongue, for the little man is a good pantomimist. Most of us have seen him illustrate the posture and steps of the dancers in the Polish mazurkas, and if he were put to it he could show us the movements of all the dances which have been "idealised" by the composers of pianoforte music.

He can also convey quite involved information by pantomime. An old concert-goer once told me that Pachmann was late in coming to the platform one cold afternoon in the March of 1890. The audience got impatient, beginning to stamp and to call out. At last Pachmann appeared; and after the usual final conversation with the companion who conveys him to the platform, he told the audience that he had arrived at the hall in a positively frozen state, with fingers as stiff as icicles and all ready to snap off if he tried to bend them, and that he had had to thaw himself very gradually before he dared attempt to play. The process of thawing, he added, was very painful, causing a flow of tears. And all this he conveyed in pantomime, finishing with the intimation that he would try to reward the audience for the delay by giving a particularly beautiful performance.

Pachmann has two distinct ways of speaking with people at concerts (he never speaks absently-minded, or to himself). One is the general way, in which he looks into the body of the hall to tell the entire audience that he has made some "innocent alterations" in the piece. The other is the individual way, in which he addresses himself to the people in the front row of the floor. Often he picks out one particular individual, especially when the platform has had to be converted into part of the auditorium. The individual thus selected may receive some curious confidences. As a rule Pachmann will only tell him that "Here Chopin weeps," or "Sophie Menter use to play this well; but I . . ."

But not infrequently he pours out at length the story of some particular trouble. I have heard of an instance in America. Pachmann had been badly treated by a critic on his previous

visit to the town. The criticism, I suppose, had rankled in his mind; and before he could start to play on this return visit he had to rid himself of the bitterness. Anyhow, he walked from the piano to a person sitting on a platform chair, and said: "Critics are villainous rascals, *canaille*. I do not read their writings. They cannot harm my grand genius or make my name cease to bring people to hear me play in thousands. The many people adore me. Kings, queens, the high nobility in Europe, they kiss my wonderful hands. I do not fear the critics."

There has been plenty of discussion about Pachmann's mannerisms. He talks, I believe, because he cannot play without talking. He is probably well enough aware of the commercial value of his peculiarities, but I do not think he exploits them deliberately for profit.

Mr. John Eshelby, the assistant manager of Steinway and Sons, who for some years "managed" him in England, told me recently that Pachmann was as difficult to control as a child and that he was incalculably touchy. It was this touchiness of his which some thirty years ago brought about a temporary, but very serious, decline in his fortunes. Pachmann had made his debut in England on May 20th, 1882, and by his poetical taste, fluency, and delicately intellectual phrasing had won such fame that almost at once he became the lion of the musical seasons for some years. (This was immediately after he had won fame in Paris.) His artistic faults, of course, were apparent then, as now; he "caricatured Schumann," and he "exaggerated Beethoven," as the critics remarked; but his great gifts as a Chopin player had marked him a man apart from all other musicians, though Pachmann himself tried hard not to be boomed as a one-composer interpreter. Later in the 1880's he and the then existing Madame de Pachmann (a pupil of his named Maggie Okey) had won a mutual fame here and in Germany. But trouble developed with the concert agents; engagements fell off; and I understand from Mr. Frederick Dawson that when Mr. Dawson called upon him in a German town he found Pachmann in quite low water, and full of bitterness. The young Englishman took some lessons, and on his return to England set to work to put matters right for this great pianist; with what success subsequent history tells. (It would be a good thing if Mr. Dawson were persuaded to write of his former acquaintance with Pachmann, for this episode is not generally known.)

We cannot hope to have Pachmann with us much longer as a public performer, because he is nearly eighty years old. He first played at concerts in 1869. Being dissatisfied with his work, he withdrew for further study until 1877, and even then his fine artistic consciousness made him withdraw yet again for a further two years of study. Consequently, he was thirty-one years old when, in 1879, he finally came forward as a public musician. I am not acquainted with any other story of equal earnestness among nineteenth century musicians. Tartini, however, the second great violinist in musical history, went beyond this; for in middle life he completely changed his manner of playing, giving up the brilliant for the expressive.

Perhaps there were physical reasons for Pachmann's long-continued studying, defects in his hands which had to be converted into virtues, for Mr. Dawson told me that his fingers are unlike the fingers of any other pianist.

"DICTION" (p. 208b).—I should not object to the use of this word in the new sense if it were taken to denote *expression*, for then there would be some slight reference back to the true meaning. But the adjudicators at competition festivals, who, I think, were the first to extend the use of the word, employ it merely to denote the sensible *articulation of words*, they put musical and poetical "expression" into a place by itself, and do not allow "diction" to appropriate the idea.

What the matter comes to is this. As elocution means "clarity of utterance in speech," so diction is made to mean "clarity of utterance in song." It is all as one feels. I personally have no desire or need to say anything other than that a singer's enunciation is good or bad. And how finely the word strikes on the mind when used with literal accuracy! Says Dryden somewhere of somebody, "There appears in every part of his diction, or expression, a kind of noble and bold purity." [To be continued.]

## TRADE WINDS AND IDLE ZEPHYRS

### Gramophone Tips

It is perfectly obvious from the main proportion of correspondence received—often from regular subscribers—that many of our readers have neglected to provide themselves with two indispensable companions—The Index to Volume II. of THE GRAMOPHONE, and *Gramophone Tips*, each costing 1s. The former is a comprehensive guide to the activities of the gramophone world last season. It may be tantalising rather than satisfying to those who do not possess back numbers—but then no one ought to be without these for reference.

*Gramophone Tips*, which contains in a brief form the accumulated experience of Captain H. T. Barnett—"those things every gramophone user ought to know"—is exactly what it professes to be. Who can deny that they want to know what an expert has to tell them on Handling Records, Cleaning Records, Waxing Records, Damp and Records, Storing Records, Turntables, Motors, Motor Speed, Diaphragm Machines, Accompaniment Records, Sound-boxes, Exhibiting Records, Rattle, Blast, Hum, Centration of Records, Counterbalance Devices, and Portables? Yet these are only some of the subjects discussed in the first chapter of General Notes! There follow more detailed chapters cram full of information, about Needle-track Alignment, the Stylus or Needle, Sound-boxes, Tone-arms, Tone-arm Continuations, Horns, Cabinets, the Surroundings, Sound-box Diaphragms, and Surface Vibration.

But you may think that such information belongs to the tiresome, mechanical side of gramophonery which should be accepted as an ugly fact but not mentioned by musical people. Still, you can hardly do without *Gramophone Tips*, if solely on account of the chapters which deal with records, telling you how to buy them, how to judge them; giving you the characteristics of every make of record in this country—its strong and weak points; suggesting good records for demonstration purposes, under the heading of Priceless Records; adding a general list of good records of every variety and ending with a unique list of Uncommon Records which shows an amazing range of experience in catalogues; and—what is very important for most of us—studying with unaffected care the requirements of the buyer with a slender purse.

There is no such book as this obtainable, as far as we know, in any country. It is an eye-opener to everyone who reads it, and should be in every house where there is a gramophone.

Copies of GRAMOPHONE TIPS can be obtained from all Messrs. W. H. Smith's bookstalls, or direct from the London Office. The price is 1/-.

### A Central Gramophone Agency

This is the heading of a cutting sent to us by a correspondent, but there is no indication as to the source from which it was extracted. Perhaps a quotation may be permitted.

"Under present conditions it is often necessary to write to a large number of gramophone firms in order to trace a record, with the result that a substantial proportion of the cost of the record is expended in postage. If we had an efficient agency in touch with all the principal gramophone companies, both the companies and the public would be benefited. With regard to the financial side of the matter, there is no doubt that the agency would be able to make arrangements with the companies to their mutual satisfaction without seriously affecting the purchaser. A special list devoted to recorded art-music would certainly be useful. At present it entails a good deal of searching to discover whether a particular symphony, concerto, quartet, or song is obtainable."

Naturally we are prepared to comply with the wishes of our readers in this respect, and on hearing that an agency of this sort would be widely supported will enlarge the present facilities for supplying information about catalogues.

### Translations and Following the Score

People write to ask why we do not print lists of Translations and of works dealt with in "Following the Score" which have appeared in earlier numbers. Is it necessary to point out that this must be done by readers themselves if they are to get the benefit of both departments? The pages concerned are purposely printed with advertisements on the back, so that they can be torn out and filed separately for future reference.

### Polydor Records

The Editor's article on Polydors in the last number seems to have stimulated rather than stemmed the volume of correspondence on this subject. Naturally the lists of records which readers recommend are apt to overlap each other, and it is not worth while publishing letters at length. But if anyone is anxious for advice in ordering Polydors, he should consult the article on pp. 373, 374 of the March number, Mr. Robey's letter on p. 450 of the April number, the letters on p. 40 of the June number, p. 83 of the July number, p. 150 of the August number, and p. 199 of the September number.

The bulk of the information this month—in view of the Editor's remarks on vocal records—is in praise of singers, among whom Selma Kurz takes the honours with her singing of *Ernani*, *Ernani* and the *Shadow Song*, 72846 ("the best vocal record of my large collection," writes Mr. C. Brown, of Harringay); but her record of Toselli's *Serenade* and of Godard's *Berceuse de Jocelyn*, 72850 (with violin obbligato by Vasa Prihoda), and of the Page's Song from *Ballo in Maschera*, 80079, and her duets with Schlusnus from the *Magic Flute* and *Don Giovanni*, 85301, are also highly recommended. Other records which have found favour are:—Hempel 85297, 85299; all Ivogün's; Lotte Lehmann 72917 and 72903; Elisabeth Schumann, 65811; Oestvig, 70665; Bohnen and Pattiera, 78548; Schorr, 62379; Schlusnus, 70660; Schwarz, 70596; Groenen, 62407; Piccaver, 72881.

Dr. Francis Mead draws special attention to 65796-7, *Quintet* for flute, oboe, horn and bassoon, by Klughardt—"an adjunct to any collection."

Mr. S. F. D. Howarth, the well-known reporting secretary of the South London Gramophonic Society, speaks very highly of Sigrid Onegin's records, especially Nos. 72687, 72714, 72745, and 72921.

### A Wireless Journal

So many of our readers have wireless sets as well as gramophones that they may like to be told of the new *Amplion Magazine*, issued by our old friends and advertisers, Messrs. Alfred Graham and Co. It is deplorable that the Algraphone and Alurette models and the Sonat Sound-box should be forced into a back seat by the increasing popularity of the Amplion and its satellites, and if these words meets the eye of the makers we hope that it will fill with tears of remorse; but there's no denying that the new magazine is an excellent production, except for its total neglect of the Algraphone.

### South Place Sunday Popular Concerts

The report of the Thirty-ninth Season, with its twenty-six concerts on Sunday evenings at 6.30 p.m., makes cheerful reading and registers an unflagging vitality of that valuable institution. The concerts are just what those of our readers who are beginning to enjoy chamber music and good songs would find most refreshing. The proceedings are informal, the audience is one of the best in the world, there is a collection in the middle of the programme to defray expenses, and the high and long traditions have built up a standard of playing and singing and listening which is of incalculable promise. The South Place Institute is in Finsbury, E.C. 2, and the Hon. Secretary is Alfred J. Clements, Esq., 8, Finsbury Way, N. 3.

### Victor Records

César Franck's *Panis Angelicus*, a Brunswick version of which is reviewed on another page, was hitherto only obtainable as sung by Frances Alda on Victor 6353 (coupled with *L'altra Notte*, which on H.M.V., D.B.635 has *Elle a fu* on the reverse). The Alda version was described by one of our correspondents (Vol. I., p. 117) as "the most perfect soprano record I know." Another famous record which is, temporarily one hopes, missing from the H.M.V. catalogue, is the Flonzaley Quartet version of Borodin's *Nocturne*, surely one of the loveliest things ever recorded; but this too can be obtained, on Victor 6361, coupled with the *Minuetto* and *Finale* from Haydn's *Quartet in D major*. Each costs 9s. 3d. in the little catalogue of Victor records issued by the Gramophone Exchange, and now increased by a new supplement. It is full of good things.

### A Liverpool Concert Calendar

The "Music and Dramatic Year Book and Directory, 1925-26," compiled and issued gratis by Messrs. Rushworth and Dreaper, Ltd., of 11-17, Islington, Liverpool, is worthy of the spacious reputation of that firm. It is extremely well put together, and must be almost a necessity for any music lover within reach of Liverpool. If only one of our London firms would inaugurate something similar what a boon it would be to concert-agents and concert-goers! All honour to Liverpool for its enterprise.

### Paul Whiteman

In a way we have Whiteman and his Orchestra always with us. There can hardly be one of our readers who has not some of his records. But it is good news that he is to pay this country another visit next April, and after two concerts at the Albert Hall and one each at the Crystal Palace and Alexandra Palace, will tour the provinces—Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow, and Edinburgh at any rate will see him "in the flesh"—a not inapt phrase.

### Jussrite Index Books

Mr. Frederic Jackson, the only begetter of the Jussrite record filing system, has now devised a loose-leaf filing index. At a first glance it looks just right, but the subject of filing systems is so thorny that we should hesitate to bank on it without thorough trial. It is a small handy book (not too well printed and with a curious but not, as you might suspect, inflammable cover), and is produced entirely on Mr. Jackson's own premises, for which we give him full credit. It will be interesting to hear in due course whether this index book satisfies the experts who bewildered us in March and June, 1924. It is sent out with all Jussrite cabinets, but costs 5s. 6d. by itself.

### Duophone Records

The November supplement of Duophone records represents the first issues made under the direct control of Lieut.-Colonel J. Mackenzie-Rogan; but they did not arrive in time for review purposes. The *Prince Igor* selection, played by the Colonel's Military Band, should be interesting (A.1018, 4s.), and the same band plays *Paderewski's Minuet* and the *Bond of Friendship* on a ten-

inch record at 2s. 6d. The Symphony Orchestra—also conducted by the Colonel—plays Coleridge-Taylor's *Petite Suite* (also issued by de Groot on H.M.V. this month) and *Benedictus*, by Sir Alexander Mackenzie, and *Intermezzo Mignon* on A.1019, A.1020 (4s. each). There are songs by Stuart Robertson (bass), Milton Stanley (tenor), and Frank Gilbert (baritone), and plenty of dance records. A sensible if not thrilling list to start with.

### Favourite Operatic Composers

The first paragraph in Mr. Klein's article on "Two Verdi Arias," in THE GRAMOPHONE for August, 1924, gains interesting confirmation from at least one part of the world, Barcelona, where, as a correspondent points out, a poll was taken by the wireless station to discover who were the listeners' favourite operatic composers. Verdi headed the poll; then came Wagner, closely followed by Donizetti. Rossini and Puccini each got half as many votes as Verdi, and the rest (including Meyerbeer?) were a long way behind.

### Isidore de Lara

Cheques or postal orders for one pound for the de Lara fund, for an Imperial and Permanent Opera House in London, may still be sent to THE GRAMOPHONE, 58, Frith Street, W. 1, on the strict understanding that the money will be returned to the sender if Mr. de Lara's scheme fails to come to anything. Full particulars of the scheme may be found in back numbers, or will be sent on request.

Mr. de Lara himself—undaunted and purposeful—receives new honours abroad, which must make him think curiously about his English supporters. He has lately been made a Chevalier of the Legion d'Honneur in France, and his opera, *Les Trois Masques*, which had such a fine reception at Aix-les-Bains, is only one of many of his operas which are being mounted this season all over the Continent.

### English as she is wrote

The following, from Quebec, is being added to our archives:—  
"DEAR SIR,—Please make me in relation with all music tore in England of Phonograph in all the line concernary the music in general i will be very much oblige for all the catalog that you sill send me.

Your very truly,

—

## National Gramophonic Society Notes

(All Communications should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, N.G.S., 58, Frith Street, London, W.1.)

The object of the National Gramophonic Society is to aim at achieving for gramophone music what such societies as the Medici have done for the printed book.

THE current year began on October 1st. In 1924-25 the following works were issued to members: Beethoven, *String Quartet in E flat, Op. 74*; Debussy, *String Quartet in G minor, Op. 10*; Schubert, *Piano Trio in E flat, Op. 100*; Schönberg, *String Sextet, Verklärte Nacht, Op. 4*; Beethoven, *String Quartet in F major, Op. 59, No. 1*; Brahms, *String Sextet in B flat major, Op. 18*; on twenty-four twelve-inch double-sided records.

The *Quartets* were played by the Spencer Dyke Quartet (Spencer Dyke and Edwin Quaife, violins, Ernest Tomlinson, viola, and Patterson Parker, 'cello); the Schubert *Trio* by Spencer Dyke, Patterson Parker, and Harold Craxton, piano, and the two *Sextets* by the Spencer Dyke Quartet with James Lockyer, violin, and E. J. Robinson, 'cello. In addition to these, in the early part of the year, Mr. W. W. Cobbett presented the first 300 members with a record of the *Allegro* from Rubinstein's *Quartet in F, Op. 17, No. 3*, and *The Declaration* from Raff's *Maid of the Mill Suite, Op. 192, No. 2*. The quartet which played these works was led by Mr. Cobbett himself. A few copies still remain, and are available to members at 5s. each. It must be clearly understood that no member may sell any N.G.S. record for less than 7s. 6d. But breakages, etc., can be replaced to members at 5s. each record.

In the choice of works the Committee (which consists of the Editor, the London Editor, and Messrs. W. R. Anderson, W. W. Cobbett, Spencer Dyke, and Alec Robertson) is guided by the voting on a preliminary list which is sent to members at the beginning of the year. As far as possible it is ascertained whether the works chosen are due to be recorded or issued in the near future by the various gramophone companies, so that duplication may be avoided.

Up to the present financial reasons have confined the output

to chamber music, but with the growth of the society more ambitious works may be issued.

The membership subscription is 5s. a year; the record subscription, for 24 discs, is £6 a year for the records at 5s. each and 10s. for postage and packing, for members in Great Britain. Members who wish to fetch their records from the office are not, of course, expected to pay this 10s. Overseas members pay 25s. instead of 10s. at the beginning of each year. The subscription can be paid in one lump sum of £6 15s. on October 1st, or two payments of £3 10s. and £3 5s. on October 1st and April 1st respectively, or monthly, 16s. on October 1st and 11s. on the first day of the other months of the year.

### Brahms and Mozart

The four records of the Brahms' *Sextet*, completing the issue for the first year, and the three ten-inch records of the Mozart *Oboe Quartet* (an explanatory note on which appeared in the August number prematurely), beginning the issues for the current year, have now been despatched to members. They should be played at 80 revolutions a minute.

### Out of Print

The inevitable has happened, and the earliest records, Beethoven's *E flat* and Debussy's *G minor* quartets, are now out of print. A waiting list is being started, and some day perhaps a new edition will be pressed; but we cannot urge our members too strongly to realise that their records are rare and in all probability cannot ever be replaced.

### New Voting List

Will any member who has not yet received the voting list for the current year please communicate with the Hon. Secretary? It is most important that there should be no delay in getting the programme settled.

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ANNOUNCE

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## THE JULY COMPETITION

(Continued from October number, p. 211).

THE eight (not seven) competitors who had ten of the winning records in their lists, out of a possible twenty-five, were as follows:—

1. MRS. THORPE, 37, Milson Road, London, W. 14.
2. MISS E. SWETLAND, 51, Branksome Wood Road, Bournemouth.
3. J. LE GRICE LACY, Framerville, The Avenue, Lowestoft.
4. D. A. ROSS, 5, Lordship Lane, Wood Green, N.22.
5. W. HIGGS, 4, Bedford Road, West Ealing, W. 13.
6. F. W. HULL, 8, Ireton Street, Belfast.
7. A. L. RALPHS, Skerryvore, Chapel Road, Abergavenny.
8. H. L. BROAD, 19, Commercial Road, Bournemouth.

The Editor has carefully considered the lists, and has decided to award the three prizes in the above order, and to add a consolation prize of fifteen shillings' worth of records to each of the other five.

Mrs. Thorpe, who thus wins Five Pounds, has a remarkable list. It includes the records numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10, 16, 17, and 18 from the winning list printed in the last number, and records numbered 28, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 41, 42, and 43 in the second list, her other six records being Alda's *Altra notte* (H.M.V., D.B.653), Dame Clara Butt's *Abide with me* (Col. 7302), Fleta's *Ay, ay, ay* (H.M.V., D.B.525), Chaliapine's *Farewell and Death of Boris* (H.M.V., D.B.100), Caruso and Melba in *O Soave Fanciulla* (H.M.V., 054129), and *Qual voluttà transcorrere* and *Je viens célébrer* on H.M.V., D.M.126. Miss Swetland sent in a thoroughly good varied list also. Mr. Lacy wrote:—"I am giving Mr. Blake what one would expect the Editor of *John o' London's Weekly* to require—a taste of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, and Brahms, and moreover a symphony, a piano concerto, a violin concerto, a string quartet, and a quintet. Vocal fare must, of necessity, be scanty; one needs another twenty-five records to build a foundation here. But if Mr. Blake has every one of the records I name below, he has the very best in music, recorded and played to perfection in every instance." Mr. Blake's comment on the list is "very good, but rather too eclectic, I think."

Of the rest, Mr. Ross is too instrumental, Mr. Higgs too vocal, Mr. Hull hardly popular enough, Mr. Ralphs entirely instrumental, and Mr. Broad over-weighted by *Meistersinger* records. Still, when all is said and done, and all kinds of statistics worked out, the fact remains that not only the above eight lists, but a good many others were extremely well compiled, and a great credit to the taste and enthusiasm of the competitors.

The first results of the voting in the July competi-

tion were given in the last number, and the twenty-five records which obtained the highest number of votes were published to form a useful reference list, especially for readers who are only beginning to form their record libraries. The following are the NEXT TWENTY RECORDS, and a further list will be published next month.

- 26.—H.M.V., D.B.111. *Vesti la giubba* and *No, pagliuccio non son!* from *Pagliacci*, sung in Italian by Caruso (8s. 6d.).
- 27.—H.M.V., D.K.119. *Ah! che la morte* (*Miserere*) from *Trovatore*, sung in Italian by Caruso and Alda, and *Ai nostri monti* from *Trovatore*, sung in Italian by Caruso and Schumann-Heink (10s.).
- 28.—H.M.V., D.B.256. *Ah! non credea mirarti* and *Come per me sereno* from *La Sonnambula* (Bellini), sung in Italian by Galli-Curci (8s. 6d.).
- 29.—Col. 935. The *Love Duet* and *Faery Chorus* from *The Immortal Hour* (Boughton), played by the London Symphony Orchestra (6s. 6d.).
- 30.—H.M.V., D.K.103. *Ave Maria* (Kahn), in Italian, and *Elégie Mélodie* (Massenet), in French, sung by Caruso with a violin obbligato by Elman (10s.).
- 31.—H.M.V., D.B.100. *Farewell of Boris* and *Death of Boris* from *Boris Godounov* (Moussorgsky), sung in Russian by Chaliapine (8s. 6d.).
- 32, 33.—H.M.V., D.551, 552. Grieg's *Concerto in A minor*, played by de Greef and the R.A.H. Orchestra (13s.).
- 34.—Voc. D.02126. *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*, *Prelude* (Debussy), played by the Aeolian Orchestra (4s. 6d.).
- 35.—Col. 576. "1812" *Overture* (Tchaikovsky), played by the Grenadier Guards Band (4s. 6d.).
- 36.—Col. L.1001. Mozart's *Magic Flute Overture*, played by the Beecham Orchestra (6s. 6d.).
- 37.—H.M.V., D.A.210. *Canzonetta in E flat*, Op. 12, No. 2 (Mendelssohn) and *Drink to me only with thine eyes* (Callcott), played by the Flonzaley String Quartet (6s.).
- 38.—H.M.V., D.133. *Tannhäuser Overture* (Wagner), played by the R.A.H. Orchestra (6s. 6d.).
- 39, 40.—Col. L.1210, 1211. Beethoven's *Kreutzer Sonata*, played by Catterall and Murdoch (13s.).
- 41, 42.—Col. L.1231, 1232. Beethoven's *Spring Sonata*, played by Catterall and Murdoch (13s.).
- 43.—H.M.V., D.502. *Siegfried's Funeral March* from *Götterdämmerung* (Wagner), played by the R.A.H. Orchestra (6s. 6d.).
- 44.—H.M.V., C.1041. *Credo* from *Otello* (Verdi) and *Non più andrai* from *Nozze di Figaro* (Mozart), sung in English by Peter Dawson (4s. 6d.).
- 45.—H.M.V., D.503. *The Entry of the Gods* from *Das Rheingold* (Wagner), played by the R.A.H. Orchestra (6s. 6d.).

## CORRESPONDENCE

*De Gustibus Non Est Disputandum.*

[All letters and manuscripts should be written on one side only of the paper and should be addressed to the Editor, The Gramophone, 58, Frith Street, London, W.1. The writer's full name and address must be given. A stamped envelope must be enclosed if an answer or the return of the manuscript is desired. The Editor wishes to emphasise the obvious fact that the publication of letters does not imply his agreement with the views expressed by correspondents.]

### WOMEN AND THE GRAMOPHONE.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—I am aware that "one swallow does not make a summer" but may I, an elderly woman, challenge any elderly man, to prove he shows more devotion to his gramophone than I do to mine.

I scurry through my breakfast of a morning to get at my records—my Bach, my Brahms, my Wagner . . . Lunch time—a short walk, and I return to study my records till bed time. I am also deeply interested in needle-track alignment and in all mechanical improvements for our beloved instrument.

My collection is enormous—picked records and best of music—and I feel amply repaid for every minute I give to it.

Yours truly,

Wick, Sussex.

AUGUSTA PENFOLD.

### "ADOLESCENS LUXU PERDITUS."—Terence.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—I really must protest against the suggestion that I have been seduced by the "Luxus" sound-box. In the interests of home industries and inventiveness I wish to correct the impression that I think the foreigner has quite beaten us. I have never considered the "Luxus" the equal of a really good No. 2; all I do claim for it is that it is the best all-round box, with that one exception, that I have so far tested.

I would suggest to sound-box makers that there is a reason for the merits of the No. 2 and its foreign competitor. Let them carefully examine the suspension of these two boxes and then see if, along the lines indicated, they cannot improve on them. Surely there need be no finality in sound-boxes, even though the average maker may find "capital" reasons for thinking that there is in regard to machines.

Yours faithfully,

C. BALMAIN.

### RECORDS AND REVIEWS.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

SIR,—There is a lot of sound common sense in Mr. Wilson's letter on page 246 of the October number.

But, whatever comes to pass, let N. P. get on with it in his own way, and give him as much space as he wants. He is too valuable to be hidebound by restrictions. He must not be interfered with. He has a large following of people who have an exalted idea of his capabilities, and if he is restricted they will be upset; they will also buy fewer records.

The Editor's reviews are unique, though one finds cause to differ from him in some things—in my case, for instance, Clara Butt's voice and Stevens's *Maud* record, both of which I love. The Editor for me has always stood on a pinnacle; so also has Mr. Klein, whose valuable articles and immense experience make him a wonderful asset to THE GRAMOPHONE. I would allot a third very choice pinnacle to N. P.—not in flattery, but in sincere thanks for teaching me, through his monthly reviews and records I have acquired largely on his recommendations, a very great deal about recorded music of the best type.

Hats off to N. P.—and hands off him!

Yours faithfully,

J. C. W. CHAPMAN.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—I have read THE GRAMOPHONE from cover to cover for at least two years, and have found it wholly admirable except for the first sentence in the August number: "This is the last quarterly review I shall write." I think I am a member of a fairly large body of gramophone owners who, not having much spare

time, use their gramophones for playing music and not for experimental purposes, and who thus find the many admirable reviews of records, new and old, the most important part of your paper. To put it bluntly: I pay a bob a month to have the work of weeding out the tares done for me. For this purpose THE GRAMOPHONE's reviews are the only ones of the slightest use. All your contemporaries say such things as "this exquisite record should be in every collection" far too often; in fact, almost always, and in consequence are of no more use than the various gramophone companies' own pamphlets.

I quite realise that most of us have some special fad or fancy, be it Galli-Curci or Mullings, de Groot or Casals, Sullivan or Wagner, and no matter what any critic may say, we stand by our hero or heroine through thick and thin, but in the main I am sure we all get a vast amount of help, financial and educational, from your many excellent critics and most especially in opening up hitherto unexplored fields of musical joy. But useful and interesting as these monthly reviews are, it is to the quarterly review that we look for help in that most important matter of value for money.

Now I take it that most of us can only afford between five and ten pounds a year for records. One symphony or orchestral concerto, one chamber music work, two or three vocal records according to our taste, an odd orchestral record or two, an "experimental" record by a composer we want to get to know, a sovereign on our special hero, and that is almost a year's ration. It really comes to this: if we buy a complete work this month and one we could have preferred is issued during the next six months we cannot have it, and every record we buy that is not completely satisfactory is keeping some unknown pearl out of our collection. It is impossible for an impecunious man to choose his records from month to month. He cannot go to his agent and listen to every symphony that is passed as being a good record by your monthly critic and buy one a year. Heaven knows my dealer is long-suffering enough, but I dare not put him to such a test as this, as he might begin to send in his bill!

You will think I am asking of you the impossible task of stating "the year's best record." Not a bit; but I do beg of you to weed and weed again. Such weeding cannot be done monthly. To pass the highest test a record must be played several times and still be returned to with pleasure. I quite see that it must be a very strenuous job writing a quarterly review, but I am sure that if you realised how dependent many of us are on it, you would revoke your decision or at least provide something in its place. It might save your time if you gave us a quarterly list of all important records with a short but well considered remark on each, such as "a good record but expensive," or "cheap at any price," or "not so good as so-and-so," or, better still, "bad," for I cannot tell you what a relief it is to have a record definitely put out of the list of possibles.

I must apologise for complaining to a source of so much pleasure.

Yours truly,

Wimpole Street, W. 1.

R. H. W.

### SOUND-BOXES.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—I was much interested in Mr. Lionel Gilman's letter in your August number. He raises an important point—the degree of faithfulness to the original of gramophone orchestral tone.

He says that whatever gramophone reproduction may lack it is certainly not brilliance. I agree. But I think he is wrong in blaming the steel needle for this false and unnatural brilliance or over-accentuation of the higher tones.

I suggest that the cause of this fault is to be found in the mica diaphragm which is fitted to nearly every "commercial" sound-box. Commercial gramophones have, moreover, nearly always a single sound-box which is expected to reproduce adequately every class of recording. The diaphragm is, in consequence, a compromise which is not suited to more than one class of reproduction—generally the solo voice—and perhaps not to that.

Solos are, I gather, sung as "close ups" right into the horn of the recording machine. This accounts for the fact that it requires a stout diaphragm to stand up against the vibrations produced on the disc. Most other music has to be played or sung at a little distance from the apparatus, and consequently a more sensitive diaphragm can, and must, be employed to reproduce the less concentrated vibrations and to catch the finer shades. In short, a diaphragm suited to reproduction of vocal solos is too stout

(or stiff) for reproduction of choral, orchestral, and piano recordings.

Of course, the relation between the diameter and the stoutness of the diaphragm is important. In the larger reproducers attempts are made, by increase of the diameter of the mica diaphragm, to overcome mica's inherent fault of exaggerating and hardening the high tones at the expense of the lower. But I do not think that it can be contended that diaphragms of over 2in. clear exposed diameter give good results, except possibly on piano.

I contend that the unnatural brilliance of which Mr. Gilman complains is due to mica, and more especially to the over-thick mica diaphragms fitted in commercial sound-boxes. Mica is an "easy proposition" commercially speaking. A fortune awaits the man who will put on the market a diaphragm which will reproduce every shade of tone in its correct proportion. There are many other diaphragms on the market, and a good many private enthusiasts make their own. Some of these are very good; some very bad. The best of them will give as great, or greater volume than mica, and will reproduce every sound that mica can extract from a record, and in much truer proportions. Consequently, they give much better light and shade, and better ensemble and crescendo effects with real depth (not deeper pitch, but what I may call stereoscopic effect). But the perfect diaphragm has yet to be found.

Meanwhile, why adopt the shallow and harsh reproduction of mica as a standard of comparison in place of the natural tone of the original music? This is what is done daily, and this is the reason why sound-boxes with other than mica diaphragms are condemned as "tubby" or "romantic." A visit to Queen's Hall is a better ear corrective than frequent and undiluted doses of mica!

This is a controversial subject. I do not wish to embark on controversy; but I, and others doubtless, would like to hear what experts think about it. Let me here confess that I am not a "fibrist."

Yours faithfully,

Camberley.

G. O. TURNBULL.

#### CONCERTOS.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—May I, through your columns, draw attention to the fact that recently Miss Myra Hess and Mr. Harold Samuel played the following concertos for two pianos and orchestra at Queen's Hall, London: *Concertos in C minor*, by Bach; in *E flat major*, by Mozart; and in *C major*, by Bach. The orchestra was conducted by Dr. Adrian Boult. So far as I am aware no double concerto has yet been recorded with the sole exception of the one in D minor for two violins by Bach. Doubtless the chief difficulty is to procure the two soloists who shall not only be good recorders but also fit one another. We now seem to have an excellent opportunity to try to persuade one of our leading recording companies to take advantage of the wonderful partnership which Miss Hess and Mr. Samuel exhibited in this equally wonderful music.

It may also be of interest to note that the Misses Harrison will be playing the Brahms' double concerto for violin and 'cello this season together in Birmingham, and also that of Delius which he wrote specially for them after hearing them perform the Brahms just mentioned.

If those who really feel that the works I have mentioned would receive a warm welcome in recorded form would only write—even a postcard—to let the recording companies have some idea of the demand I do not think we should wait long for an answer in practical form.

Yours faithfully,

(Rev.) D. CAMPBELL-MILLER.

#### WAGNER RECORDS.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—I wish to thank your two correspondents, Mr. Desmonde and W. G. W., for their hints about Polydor *Ring* records. I did not realise that *Auf wolkigen Höhn* was a portion of the Wanderer's conversation with Mime in Act I. of *Siegfried*, being under the impression that it came in Act III. where the Wanderer shows Siegfried the fire on Brünnhilde's Rock, which is recorded on H.M.V. D.B.441 (b).

I did not include *Abendlich strahlt* (this has also been recorded by Van Rooy in H.M.V. No. 2 Catalogue) as it would only be repeated orchestrally in the *Entry of the Gods* record and would hardly be an additional record.

I have heard the other two *Siegfried* records mentioned, but as most of this music appears on the H.M.V. records and I did not like the heavy penetrating voices of Kraus, Lieban, etc., I did not include them in my list.

I think it is a great pity the H.M.V. did not make a great effort at the time and give us each of the *Ring* operas done as comprehensively as their *Meistersinger* group. It would not then have been necessary to pounce on any other odd record to increase our *Ring* repertoire, and after all the H.M.V. have beaten all the rest so far as tone, volume, and balance of voices and orchestra is concerned. The chief shortcomings in the *Meistersinger* records are (1) cutting the few bars out at the end of Act I. (plenty of room on D.749 (a)), (2) Act II. Sachs' and Eva's duet on one side instead of two (two full versions on Polydor), (3) Beckmesser's *Serenade* and the *Riot* should have been done on two sides at least. By only devoting one side (D.752 (a)) the H.M.V. break off quite suddenly in the middle of the *Serenade*, and without any of the amusing squabble between Beckmesser and Sachs leading up gradually to the riot, they plunge us headlong into the most frenzied height of the row. It was well worth recording every note of that scene. They might have followed up the *Prelude* to Act III. by the duet between Sachs and David (Polydor 61848) leading up to the *Wahn Monologue* which need not have been lopped off that gorgeous long drawn note at the end.

The remainder practically leave nothing to be desired and if only the *Ring* had been done as generously!

Yours faithfully,

MAURICE W. BATEMAN.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—"W. G. W.'s" plaintive cry in your September issue has touched my heart! In spite of the fact that I have little German and less "Opera English," and at the risk of the perpetual wrath of my neighbours who only delight in "restaurant" music, I have sat me down and played over all my H.M.V. records of the *Ring* in order to give him the information he wants. Here it is:—

#### RHINEGOLD (F. Jameson's translation).

D.677 *Alberich Steals the Gold*.—This begins with "Spottet nur zu! Der Niblung naht eurem Spiel!" or, as the translation has it, "Mock ye, then on! the Niblung neareth your toy," and continues to the end of the scene. The transformation music for the opening of the second scene completes the first side.

*The Descent to Nibelheim*.—The second side opens with Wotan's instruction, "Ihr andern harrt bis Abend hier" (Ye others wait till evening here) at the end of Scene 2, and includes the farewells of Donner, Froh, and Fricka together with the transformation music, and the clanging of hammers.

*The Capture of Alberich*.—I confess I am baffled here. I think it starts "Krumm und grau kreiche Kröte" (Crooked toad creep thou hither). Anyhow we get the last few lines of the scene and the ascent to the open space in the mountains, with the captive Alberich. This is the only vocal record of the *Rhinegold* that H.M.V. have given us as yet. Dare we hope for more?

#### VALKYRIE (Corder's translation).

D.678 *Siegmund sees the Sword*.—This gives the whole of Siegmund Soliloquy, commencing "Ein Schwert verhiess mir der Vater" (A sword once promised my father). The other side is taken up with the orchestral introduction to the act.

D.679 *Siegmund Greets the Spring Night*.—The record begins with Siegmund's embracing Sieglinde passionately, "Dich selige Frau hält nun der Freund" (Thou'rt now, mistress fair, held by that friend), but omits Sieglinde's cry when she sees the door open of its own accord. It continues "Keiner ging" (No one passed), and then continues straight on to the end of Siegmund's beautiful song to spring, "Vereint sind Liebe und Lenz" (Now spring at last holds his love). Polydor 72934 follows immediately here.

*Siegmund draws out the Sword*.—Side 2 begins where Siegmund springs on the table at the foot of the tree and grasps the sword-hilt "Siegmund heiss' ich" (or, as Corder translates, "Siegmund, hight" (! !)). Sieglinde's passionate outburst, "Bist du Siegmund" (Art thou Siegmund?) is cut for some unknown reason—there is plenty of surface space—and the record finishes, "So blühe denn Wälsungen-Blut" (So blest may the Volsungs abound).

D.680 *Brünnhilde's Battle Cry*.—Here we follow straight on with Wotan's "Nun zäume dein Ross" (Make ready thy steed) and the Valkyrie's "Hojotoho."

*Wctan warns Brünnhicle not to Disobey.*—The second side begins in the middle of one of Wotan's solo's with the words "So nimm meinen Segen" (Then now take my blessing), and continues the dialogue between father and daughter to Wotan's violent exit, "Dies sei der Walküre Werk" (Brynhild' must work out my will).

D.681 *Brünnhilde foretells Siegmund's Death.*—It took me some little time to sort this out, but I think it will be found that the record opens with "Siegmund! Sieh' auf mich!" (Siegmund! see'st thou me?) and continues to "Zur Wal kor ich ihn mir" (Away must he with me), some fourteen lines down. There is then a cut in the dialogue until we come to Siegmund's bitter pleading, "So jung und schön" (So young and fair), and continues to Brünnhilde's exit, "Auf der Walstatt gruss' ich dich wieder," which Corder renders "At the combat seek for my coming."

D.682 *Brünnhilde gives Sieglinde the Broken Sword.*—The second side of D.681 gives the ride of the Valkyries. D.682 commences with Sieglinde's prayer for safety, "Rette mich, Kühne!" (Rescue me, brave one!) and continues down to the point where Wotan enters as the Warrior Maidens try to hide Brünnhilde in their midst.

D.929 *Wotan overtakes Brünnhilde.*—This record comes next and takes up the story where the last left off with the words "Wo ist Brünnhilde?" There is a cut in Wotan's solo beginning "Weichherziges" (Weak-spirited womanish brood), starting from the words "So wisst denn" (Now wist ye), and picking up the thread at "Hörst du's, Brünnhilde?" (Hearrest thou, Brünnhilde?), side one ends with "Was so du noch bist!" (but merely thyself).

*Wotan's Sentence.*—Side two follows straight on and continues to "Sonst erhartt Jammer euch hier!" (Lest I hurl woe on your heads).

D.682 *Brünnhilde implores the Protection of Fire.*—The second side of this record commences "Du zeugtest ein edles Geschlecht" (Once mad'st thou a glorious breed), thus cutting the long dialogue in which the Valkyr pleads with her father in vain. I hope H.M.V. will give this to us soon; one double-sided record should hold it easily.

D.B.440 *Wotan bids Farewell to Brünnhilde.*—The last words of D.682 are "Dem freislichen Felsen zu nah'n!" (To ravish the rock of its prize) and D.B.440 carries straight on with "Leb' wohl" (Farewell).

*Wotan Kisses Brünnhilde into a Deep Slumber.*—The second side carries on directly and in turn leads on to D.B.439, *The rock is surrounded by fire*, which gives the invocation to Loge (Loge, hear!) and the fire music to the end of the opera.

#### SIEGFRIED (German text only.)

D.700 *Siegfried Forges the Broken Sword.*—This record is made up of excerpts apparently. As far as I can make out it starts with Siegfried's song, "Notung! Notung! Neidliches Schwert! was musstest du zerspringen?" and gives twenty lines of the text down to "Blase, Balg, blase die Glut!" There is then a considerable break until we reach the Hammer Song, of which we have the last verse beginning "Der frohen Funken." From there we jump to the last two lines of the act.

*Mime's Treachery.*—The second side begins with Siegfried's "Was ihr mir nützt," and carries straight through to Mime's words, "dein Leben musst du mir lassen!"

D.701 *Siegfried follows the Forest Bird.*—The record begins, towards the end of Siegfried's last long solo in the act, with the words "Freundliches Vöglein," and carries on to the end of the scene.

D.B.441 *Wotan invokes Erda.*—After the long introduction to the third act the Wanderer's "Wache, Wache" (Awake, Awake) is given in full.

*Siegfried's Ascent to the Valkyn's Rock.*—Side two commences in the middle of one of Siegfried's solos with the words "Blick nach der Höh'!" and continues to the end of the act. Rather a poor measure of Clarence Whitehill this for a "Celebrity" at 8s. 6d.!

D.701 *Brünnhilde Hails the Radiant Sun.*—The second side of D.701 takes us to the last act. It begins with Brünnhilde's "Heil dir Sonne;" ("Hail the Sunshine," as Madam Austral sings), and includes the duet, finishing four lines after with the words "Du Wecker des Lebens, siegendes Licht!"

D.702 *Brünnhilde Recalls her Valkyrie Days.*—Side one starts "Ewig war ich" and goes straight on to five lines from the end of Siegfried's impassioned love speech, finishing with the words "Mein Sehnen schwänd' in der Flut!"

*Brünnhilde Yields to Siegfried.*—This is another bit of patchwork. Starting with Brünnhilde's "O Siegfried! Dein war ich von je!" it is cut eight lines further on from "Fasst dich mein Arm" down to the end of Siegfried's question. Twelve lines of Brünnhilde's reply follows and then there is another gap until we get to "Ha! Wie des Blutes Ströme sich zünden" from which point the record goes straight to the end.

#### GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG (German text only.)

D.703 *Parting of Siegfried and Brünnhilde.*—The two sides give the whole of the scene between the hero and his wife without cuts ("Zu neuen Taten, teurer Hilde").

D.704 *Gunther and Gutrune welcome Siegfried.*—Side one commences with the words "Begrüsse froh, O Held," as Gunther welcomes the hero, and follows the text to the point where Gutrune hands the drugged wine to Siegfried, ending with his toast, "Brünnhilde, bring' ich dir!"

*Hagen Meditates Revenge.*—The rest of the scene is omitted up to the point where Hagen is left alone, side two beginning with his Soliloquy, "Hier sitz' ich zur Wacht."

D.930 *Hagen Summons his Vassals.*—The record starts with Hagen's call to arms, "Hoiho, Hoiho, Hoiho," the first side finishing with the words "Dass gute Ehe sie gebe!" Side two carries straight on to the end of the chorus of welcome as Brünnhilde lands.

D.705 *Introduction and Rhinemaidens' Song.*—This is the usual concert arrangement so often heard at the Queen's Hall. Side two begins the finale of the opera. It is rather hard to say what exactly are the first words since Madame Austral is not at all clear in her enunciation, but I think that the whole of Brünnhilde's solo is given on this and D.706 commencing with the words "Starke Scheite."

Yours faithfully,

West Ealing.

WILFRID B. HAWORTH.



#### A FRIENDLY GUIDE

#### EVERYBODY'S GUIDE TO BROADCAST MUSIC (Hodder & Stoughton, 3s. 6d.). By Percy A. Scholes.

The title is friendly, and that word best describes the writer and his whole attitude towards the plain man. Some of the points he has touched upon in his B.B.C. talks are expanded in this book; but there is a lot of additional information, all put as simply as may be, without talking down to anyone, or puzzling the wayfaring man, as the manner of some is. An opening chapter asks—and replies to the question—What is Music? This thorny point settled, we go on to chapters on the basic facts about the way music is made up—on sonatas, *How Music Grew Up*, on songs, on the orchestra, and on performance. Mr. Scholes's ideal is "Every man his own critic." He throws out leading ideas as to how reasonable judgments may be made. *What is Good Singing?* he asks, and shows what the experienced critic listens for—that balance of the qualities of voice, mind and heart that endears to us singers like John Coates.

One of the secrets (if such there be) of Mr. Scholes's success is his capacity to enter into the mind of the layman, and to anticipate his difficulties. He always gives, with the titles of any books he recommends (and there are a good many mentioned here) the publisher and price. A small thing, but it counts. His breadth of mind and fairness appear in his chapter, *Is Modern Music any Good?* There are some good illustrations of individual orchestral players performing upon their instruments.

The book is somewhat simpler than the "Listener's Guide" and "Listener's History" (Oxford Press), but it contains a lot of fresh matter, and its lists of books would be useful to all gramophiles. "The test of the book's success," he says, "will be a double one—Does its reader feel that he not only understands music a little better, but feels a little keener about it?" I anticipate a unanimous vote from all who get hold of it with the right spirit of willingness to meet a friend half-way—to take a little trouble in order to get a great deal of pleasure, both present and future.

K. K.

## Gramophone Societies' Reports

**CANNOCK CHASE GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.**—A meeting was held in the "Link" Room, Chads Moor, on Monday, October 5th, to decide upon the formation of a gramophone society for Cannock Chase, with which is incorporated the Beethoven Gramophone Society. It was felt by the members of the latter that progress would be much greater if we made it a general society. The meeting, though not great in numbers, was very interesting, and the society was formed and named the Cannock Chase Gramophone Society. Mr. Allman promised to give the first half of the programme on his Academy hornless and Luxus sound-box with records from the September and October lists of Vocalion records. Mr. Davies promised to bring his favourite band, and Mr. S. E. Willetts offered to provide the last half of the programme, 8 p.m. to 9 p.m., for the November meeting. The annual fee is 2s. 6d. Meetings will be held on the first Monday in each month at 7 p.m.—SAMUEL E. WILLETTES, Hon. Secretary (pro tem.).

**CARDIFF AND DISTRICT GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.**—On September 24th, at the Foresters' Hall, Charles Street, Mr. White opened the session by presenting the opera *Pagliacci*. The records were a complete set, in the old single-sided Monarch issues, and were, of course, some ten or fifteen years old. Allowing for this, the recording seemed singularly good on the whole, and it was only at rare intervals that our ears were assailed by unpleasant noises. It transpired that Mr. White had actually seen this opera no less than thirty times, so that one could readily understand his complete familiarity with the plot and libretto. This enabled him to bind the seventeen or eighteen records into a certain cohesion, and by the help of his connecting narrative and running comments we could picture the scenes for ourselves. The singing was consistently good, but perhaps the gem of the series was Huguet's rendering of the difficult *Bird Aria* in the first act.

Mr. White was full of enthusiasm, and clearly enjoyed the recital quite as much as did his audience. He deserves our thanks for providing an evening's "entertainment" (as he preferred to call it!) and opening the season's meetings in such good style. Acknowledgments are due to Messrs. Dale Forty for their kindness in furnishing the H.M.V. gramophone.

We are pleased to acknowledge a letter from the Vocalion Company indicating that they will be sending us a selection of records from their future monthly bulletins; needless to say, these discs will be extremely useful, and we sincerely appreciate the offer of our good friends. An attractive syllabus has now been prepared, and copies are available from the secretary.—TREVOR PRICE, Hon. Recording Secretary.

**THE DUBLIN GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.**—The second annual general meeting of the Dublin Gramophone Society was held on October 8th, with Dr. J. F. Larchet, M.S.D., the president, in the chair. Dr. Larchet in his address welcomed the members and reviewed the work accomplished by the society in the first year of its existence. He said that report of the society had travelled afar, as he encountered on his travels about Ireland more than one enquiry about the gramophone society in Dublin.

The routine business usual to general meetings was satisfactorily accomplished, one important decision being a change in the society's headquarters. The very encouraging financial result of the first year made it feasible to move to more luxurious and commodious quarters. A discussion took place on the type of programmes for the meetings during the coming session, and there was a strong feeling that lecture-demonstrations by lecturers of authority in their subjects would be very welcome. This feeling was to an extent based on the very great success of the two meetings during the past year, which were addressed by Mr. Compton Mackenzie and Dr. Larchet respectively.

The society wants new members to enable it to extend its importance and influence, and it is hoped that all Dublin gramophone enthusiasts and music-lovers whose names are not already on its membership roll will communicate with the hon. secretary, Mr. L. J. Archer, 7, Merrion View Avenue, Merrion, Dublin.—NOEL C. WEBB, Hon. Reporting Secretary.

**THE LEICESTER GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.**—The opening meeting of the second session was held on Monday, October 5th, and there was an enthusiastic attendance of more than forty to hear selected items from the October list of new records. Judging from this very successful first night it is evident that the society is making great headway. An interesting programme has been

arranged, and local enthusiasts are cordially invited to become members. Meetings are held in the Turkey Café, on alternate Monday evenings, commencing at 7.30. On October 19th Mr. T. V. White gave an address on "The Manufacture of Records"; and a dance is being arranged for December 4th to clear the debt on the society's machine.

Further information can be obtained from the president, Mr. J. Davies, 47, Stoughton Street, or the hon. secretary, Mr. W. H. Abel, 87, Mansen Road.

**LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT GRAMOPHONE AND PHONOGRAPH SOCIETY.**—The thirteenth annual general meeting of the society was held at Rushworth Hall, Islington, on September 7th, and it is gratifying to note that the society continues to make steady progress. The register shows that the number of active members is upwards of one hundred, whilst the finances are in a more flourishing condition than ever before. Efforts will be made to make the present session one of outstanding interest with a series of attractive meetings. The social side of the society's activities will receive special attention and refreshments will be served in the tastefully appointed tea-room adjoining the lecture hall, at all ordinary meetings. Officers for the current session are as follows: President, F. W. Buzzard; vice-president, S. F. Edwards; general and recording secretary, J. W. Harwood; treasurer, W. J. Lloyd; committee, Mrs. Collett, Mrs. Buzzard, Miss J. Kelly, Messrs. Silcock, Parry, W. Riddick, Bradford, Scott, Andrews, and Wilson. Meetings will be held as heretofore, every second and fourth Monday in each month, at 7.30 p.m.

At the first ordinary meeting a selection of records, selected by Mr. R. Newby, and consisting mostly of selections recorded by the new improved process, was presented. Though the high expectations of most were not fully realised it was generally conceded that the new records are marked by some improvement in clarity and purity of tone and more especially by a noticeable advance in the matter of balance between the various parts in both vocal and instrumental works. Some of the records, however, and particularly piano solos, were marred by a roughness and "twang" for which it is difficult to account.

For the programme submitted at the second September meeting the writer was responsible, and to test the demand for good orchestral music in an "unabridged edition" the *Francesca da Rimini* of Tchaikovsky, and *Le Carnaval des Animaux*, of Saint-Saëns, were included. In the comments made at the close of the meeting special mention and high praise were bestowed on these particular records. It is of interest that the *Students' Festival Overture*, of Brahms, was also received with commendation, evidence that with the works of this composer—as with those of Bach—appreciation and understanding will result from a judiciously chosen introduction.—J. W. HARWOOD, Recording Secretary.

**NELSON AND DISTRICT GRAMOPHONE MUSIC SOCIETY.**—On Tuesday, September 29th last, the above society held its first meeting, presided over by Mr. E. T. Barker, vice-president. The aims of the society are to encourage the appreciation of good music, to give members and the public every opportunity of hearing the best music, to provide facilities for social intercourse among those interested in recorded music, and to be a medium for the interchange of experience upon technical points. A very varied programme was then entered upon and occasioned enthusiastic comment and discussion, the informal and illuminating remarks of the chairman adding even more enjoyment to each item. Many kinds of music were heard; opera was represented by arias sung by Stracciari, Edna Thornton, Caruso, Galli-Curci, Perini, and De Luca; of instrumentalists we had Heifetz, Kreisler, Renée Chemet, Mary Law, W. H. Squire, and Paderewski; while *Rio Grande*, the sea-shanty, and the 850-voiced record of *John Peel* were unusual types of vocal music.

The committee have every hope of forming a very interesting programme for the session. At the end of October Mr. F. De Luce will give a demonstration-lecture on "Folk Music and the Musician," while in November Mr. Croasdale has promised to demonstrate the capabilities of an entirely new H.M.V. model. All interested in the new society are cordially invited to attend the meetings, which will be held fortnightly in the Borough Café, Leeds Road. The annual subscription is 5s. Further particulars may be had from Mr. A. C. Wood, 18, Malvern Road, Nelson, the secretary.—MARGARET E. WADDINGTON.

(Continued on p. 297.)

# Analytical Notes and First Reviews

## CHAMBER MUSIC

### A BEETHOVEN CENTENARY

**COLUMBIA.**—L.1672-6 (five 12in. records, 32s. 6d.).—The Lener String Quartet: *Quartet in A minor, Op. 132*. Ref. Eulenburg miniature score. Also in *Philharmonia*.

It is perhaps almost impossible for us fully to understand the state of mind and heart that brought forth the last works of Beethoven. Here was a genius who had passed through much joy and much tribulation. Ten years before he wrote the *A minor* quartet he was at the height of his success. Suddenly came all manner of nagging troubles—domestic worries, the oncoming of disease, increasing deafness. Imagine the action of these ills upon the immensely proud and powerful spirit. They would have driven a lesser man to drink. They urged Beethoven to the finest deliverance of his soul through mighty music. Possibly his view of some realities of the world of men made him dissatisfied with the forms and fashions of the world of music. He seeks a finer means of expression—and seeks it often ruggedly, sometimes (but rarely, as becomes the seer) fumblingly. The moods of his mind are transmuted into the one means of expression that transcends thought set forth in words. No wonder his friends were disappointed but we who can see the genius more clearly—and see him whole—know something of the ferment that was going on in his mind, the inexorable impulse towards new paths in composition. He must have felt that his life was nearing its close; we can understand his feeling how immensely difficult was the work of reconstruction, how short his time for labour in a gigantic task. Older moulds had to be broken that the new work should have fitting encasement. Small wonder if some saw only the broken shards, grieving at what they deemed mere destruction, unmindful of the greater things growing up in their midst.

There is no need to approach the *A minor* work with anxiety. It breathes sweetness and light, it has lovely tunes, and its moods are such as, for the most part, can readily be felt and responded to by all. In one way the music is easier to listen to than some of the earlier Beethoven; few movements are in any complex form. We have a series of short meditations, with sudden pauses and changes of attack, as if the giant were seeking unrestingly for the freest means of utterance. In places he abandons set rhythm for a burst of impassioned recitative. We are reminded, by such passages as that on page 33, of the basses' dramatic passages alone, in the opening of the last part of the Ninth Symphony. The trend of the master's thought might in one way be expressed as a casting aside of the older exposition of drama in music—the taking two contrasted subjects (hero and heroine, as it were) and showing their reaction to circumstance. There is a greater tendency to make one idea prominent, but to make it burgeon and blossom into something finer and rarer than ever before had been produced. This is quite easily noticeable in the first two movements. In the third we have one of those lovely glimpses of Beethoven the man. In the early part of 1825 he had been seriously ill. At the beginning of the *Adagio* of this quartet he writes "Sacred song of thanks to God of one restored to health; in the Lydian mode." This quietly devotional melody is set forth in the simplest, most beautiful way. Very soon comes a stately movement, like the old Saraband, above which he writes "Feeling new strength," and one can picture the convalescent, getting about a little after his time of trial and boredom, and delighting in the sights of nature. The gentle effervescence in the *Andante* suggests this to perfection, it seems to me. There is a combination of the two ideas, and then he wreathes a sweet thought or two around the soft Lydian tune, marking the music "With the most intimate expression," and takes leave of the mood in a spirit that is surely the most beatific that music can express.

The last movement, after the short march-like section (which again reminds us of one of the Ninth Symphony's varied joyous moods), and after a moment of recitative, falls into the form of an *Allegro appassionato* of (for the most part) pellucid clarity. It is a point of special interest in connection with the production of these records that the quartet (one of three commissioned by a Russian prince) was first performed on November 6th, 1825, so those who have the records early can celebrate the centenary.

I believe that anyone who comes to this work without prejudice, and with a sympathetic mind, will be sure to find in it both refresh-

ment and wonder. The Lener players do a very great deal to help us to approach the music in the best way. The leader's vibrato I do not, personally, care for. It is not distressing, but I prefer the pure-drawn tone in almost all quartet work. The 'cello and viola seem scarcely strong enough for some of the contrapuntal work, but this is partly accounted for by the leader's habit of making his part a little too prominent. For many felicities of phrasing and reticence we have to praise them highly. I still think that they might move us more deeply if they were to cultivate yet finer shades. Their *pp*, for instance, might be refined still further. There is not quite as much contrast between their loudest and softest tone as I should like. All this criticism must be understood as but slightly emphasised, and all the praise as most warmly bestowed.

The breaks occur: First movement, page 10, end of top line; second movement, bottom of page 20; side 5, bottom line of page 25, bar 3; side 6, page 28, line 2 (at the *Andante*); side 7, page 31, line 2, bar 4; side 8, end of *Adagio*, page 33, line 2; side 9, page 37, line 2, bar 3.

K. K.

### COLUMBIA.

L.1661, 1662, 1663 (12in., 6s. 6d. each).—Albert Sammons (violin) and William Murdoch (piano): *Sonata in G major, Op. 13* (Grieg).

Grieg's delicate, essentially second-rate talent (in the sense that a minor poet is second-rate), finds its best expression in small piano pieces and songs and not in works where a sense of form and a capacity for development are required. Moreover, the range of his thematic material is small and labours, a further handicap, under the same limitations as that of the Russian school in its affinity or actual identity with folk music. Short-breathed themes without the possibility of development conditional in works of large calibre do not promise much success.

The *Sonata* under review, charming as it is, is a good illustration of the above remarks.

The *Lento doloroso* which opens the first movement (played with exquisite tone by Albert Sammons) expresses little more than the grief of a child deprived of its toy—albeit that is a very real grief. The same small scale of emotion may be found all through the work in spite of such passages as the finales, to the first and last movements, where the themes simply will not carry the rather hectic, grandiose climaxes planned by Grieg with any assumption of dignity or sincerity.

The first impression these themes make, such as the folk dance tunes of the first and third movements, the lyrical grace of those in the second movement, is one of great charm, particularly when reinforced by such fine playing as these two artists give us. But there soon succeeds a weariness as the same figuration, the lack of contrast, the constant sequential treatment, continues. (The sound is forced, the notes are few.)

However, though the sonata will not bear, so far as the writer is concerned, playing straight through when exposed to that merciless critic, the gramophone, yet a movement at odd times, particularly when one is in a mellow, reminiscent mood, is indeed soothing. No call is made upon the intelligence, as in the Beethoven masterpiece *Columbia* issue this month, but the ear is greeted with a suave flow of melody, most excellently played and recorded.

The only criticism in the latter respect is in regard to the piano-tone, which is rather according to ancient, and not modern, standards; the balance, therefore, is imperfect.

N. P.

### HOMOCHORD.

P.5007 (12in., 4s.).—Rose Instrumental Quartette: *Scherzo in D major* (Tchaikovsky) and *Scherzo in D minor* (Schubert).

I should like to be able to give this record unqualified praise, because the issue of cheap string quartet records is much to be commended. In so far as the Homochord people have had the enterprise to publish two good pieces of music on a record with a good surface, they are worthy of great praise. But the "Rose Instrumental Quartette" must not be confused with the famous Rosé Quartet. The rhythm of this body is quite good, but the tone of the first violin poor and pinched; the other instruments can barely be heard some of the time. The music, naturally, sounds rather dull under these unfavourable circumstances. It is not that players of international fame are needed, but just four good musicians who have worked hard together for some time. N. P.

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## PARSIFAL

## HIS MASTER'S VOICE.

D.1025 (12in., 6s. 6d.).—**Symphony Orchestra** conducted by Albert Coates : **Prelude**. (Two sides.)

D.1026 (12in., 6s. 6d.).—(a) **Prelude** (continued); (b) **Act 1, Gurnemanz reproaches Parsifal for slaying the swan.** Vocalists, Radford (bass) and Widdop (tenor).

D.1027 (12in., 6s. 6d.).—(a) **Gurnemanz leads Parsifal to Montsalvet.** Vocalists, Radford and Widdop. (b) **The Knights of the Grail assemble.** **Symphony Orchestra**.

D.1028 (12in., 6s. 6d.).—(a) **Act 1, Amfortas' Lament.** **Symphony Orchestra** and Percy Hemming (baritone); (b) **Act I, Grail Scene.** **Symphony Orchestra** and George Baker (baritone).

D.1029 (12in., 6s. 6d.).—**Grail Scene** (continued). (Two sides.)

D.1030 (12in., 6s. 6d.).—**Act 2, Klingsor's Magic Garden and the Flower Maidens' Scene** (**Symphony Orchestra**).

D.B.862 (12in., 8s. 6d.).—**Göta Ljungberg** (soprano) : (a) **Act 2, Herzeleide (Ich sah das Kind);** (b) **Act 2, Kundry describes the curse laid upon her (Seit Ewigkeiten harre ich deine).** **Orchestra** conducted by Eugene Goossens.

D.B.1231 (12in., 6s. 6d.).—**Good Friday Music.** **Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by Albert Coates. (Two sides.)

The Editor had occasion, not long ago, to make some scathing remarks about *Parsifal*. This opera has, of course, always been the subject of furious denunciation or ardent championship. Some (perhaps our Editor is one of them) feel that Wagner has used a most sacred thing, the symbolism of the Grail, purely for dramatic, even theatrical, purposes: without real sincerity or truly religious motives. To have that feeling is, necessarily, to find the whole work infinitely distasteful. Others have gone so far as to discover an anti-social bias in the story.

Personally the Grail scene never fails to move me emotionally, though I cannot approve it with my intellect which has, as it were, to be shut off just then; but no such reservation is necessary in regard to the Good Friday music, which is fragrant with beauty of a high order. The present big issue of records of the opera contains the cream of the music, and, being up-to-date recording, is for that reason, as well as intrinsically, of great interest. The brass throughout are most vivid and thrilling, and the chorus work comes out splendidly. Even the "voices in the dome" passage has, as is so often the case on the stage, no lapses in intonation, while the broad *arpeggio* passages for strings, in the prelude and Grail scene are most realistically done; one can feel the bowing. Of the singers Percy Hemming is most successful in Amfortas' poignant lament—music that should move a heart of stone. None of the singers' diction is very clear, however. The Flower Scene is a failure. Why were the chorus not used instead of these uninspiring instrumental parts? Again the *Herzeleide* does not quite come off; like the Flower Scene, it is rather dull. Certainly it is impossible for a mezzo-soprano to sing it without shrieking once or twice—Kundry's is a very cruel part—but Mme. Ljungberg is a soprano to whom high notes offer no difficulty. Somehow it just misses fire. The famous bells clang out brazenly in the Transformation Music and the Knights' March, played, however, with beautiful precision, sounds as commonplace as ever. Undoubtedly the pick of a fine set of records is the Prelude, the whole of the Grail Scene, and the Good Friday music, *Amfortas' Lament* and *Klingsor's Magic Garden*.

Those who regard *Parsifal* less as an opera—one remembers the hushed solemnity of the audience—than as a religious exercise will be overjoyed at the issue of these records. And only a little less those who admire, even if critically, Wagner's great genius, and find a certain noble pathos in this, his swan song.

N. P.

## ORCHESTRAL

## PARLOPHONE.

E.10366,7,8 (12in., 4s. 6d. each).—**Opera House Orchestra** conducted by Dr. Weissmann : **Symphony in G minor** (Mozart). (G. and T. Philharmonia.)

E.10364—5 (12in., 4s. 6d. each).—**Opera House Orchestra** conducted by E. Moerike : **Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks** (Strauss). (G. and T. Philharmonia.)

E.10371 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—**Edith Lorand Orchestra** : **Sylvia Fantasia** (Delibes).

## VOCALION.

A.0242,3,4 (10in., 5s. 6d.).—**Jelly d'Aranyi** (violin) and **Orchestra** conducted by S. Chapple : **Concerto No. 3 in G** (Mozart). (G. and T.) On last side : **Menuetto from Serenade No. 7 (Haffner)** (Mozart).

K.05199 (10in., 4s. 6d.).—**The Modern Chamber Orchestra** conducted by S. Chapple : **Spanish Dance No. 1** (Granados) and **Metropolitan Opera House Orchestra of New York** : **Goyescas Intermezzo** (Granados).

## COLUMBIA.

L.1648 and 1649 (12in., 6s. 6d. each).—**The String Orchestra** conducted by Gustav Holst : **St. Paul's Suite** (Jig, Ostinato, Intermezzo, Finale); and (on last side) **Country Song (No. 1 of Songs without Words)** (Holst).

L.1677 (12in., 6s. 6d.).—**New Queen's Hall Orchestra** conducted by Sir Henry Wood : **Oberon Overture** (Weber). (G. and T., Philharmonia).

9018 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—**The Lyric Theatre (Hammersmith) Orchestra** conducted by Alfred Reynolds : **Selection, The Duenna** (Reynolds, after Linley).

## HIS MASTER'S VOICE.

D.1034 (12in., 6s. 6d.).—**The Royal Albert Hall Orchestra** conducted by Sir Landon Ronald : **A Midsummer Night's Dream, Nocturne** (Mendelssohn).

## ACO.

G.15771 (10in., 2s. 6d.).—**Grosvenor Orchestra** : **Spanish Dance, Op. 12** (Moszkowski) and **Hungarian Dance No. 1** (Brahms).

## ACTUELLE.

15200 (11.3 in., 4s.).—**Pathé Symphony Orchestra** : **Two Norwegian Dances** (Grieg).

## BRUNSWICK.

50058 (12in., 8s.).—**Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra** conducted by H. Verbrugghen : **Prelude and Mazurka from Coppelia Ballet** (Delibes) and **Dernier Sommeil de la Vierge** (Massenet).

## HOMOCHORD.

H.B.2119 (10in., 2s. 6d.).—**Jeno Fesca and his Orchestra** : **Scherzo from A Midsummer Night's Dream** (Mendelssohn) and **Minuet from Symphony No. 39 in E flat** (Mozart).

*Parlophone*.—It is amazing to consider what must have been the mental concentration and illumination of Mozart in the summer of 1788, when within a couple of months he produced three of his greatest symphonies, each as different from the others emotionally as it could be—works happy, noble, and troubled, if we choose to characterise the *E flat*, the *Jupiter*, and the *G minor* by a word apiece. Truly that "heart of fire and brain of ice" that Wagner speaks of as the vital necessities for the composer were Mozart's.

There is a breath as of foreboding in the *G minor*, a more sombre feeling than that of the other two. It is music peculiarly meet for these waning days of the year, when the face of nature has changed from summer loveliness to autumn brooding. The dignity and power of nature are in the music, too—the dignity that suggests the unchanging processes of life, that in right contemplation are noble, howsoever sad.

The orchestration peculiarly suits the work's mood—strings, wood-wind, and horns only. The blare of the heavier brass would be out of place. The gravity of the horns alone is required.

The music has been annotated before—in Vol. II., pp. 177, 216—so I need only say a word about the recording. This strikes me as clearer than some Parlophone symphonic work I have heard. The wood-wind does not always record in perfect proportion. Some clarinet notes, for example, stick out; but the oboe is less troublesome in this way than I have known it. The lower strings are neat and well-rounded in antiphonal work, though I could like still stronger definition in chordal passages. The first movement is subdued, and does not quite give the impression of disturbance of mind that I feel is in the music. The second movement is taken rather deliberately, so that its sweetness and faint sadness exhale. The wood-wind might be a little stronger, on the whole. It has such an important part to play here. Few movements are more difficult to record really well. The poignancy of one chord in the movement always comes keenly upon me—that which begins the forty-fourth bar (and the hundred-and-fifteenth). It hints at so much.



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Jahn finds spiritual conflict even in the Minuet. Its firmness is curiously austere, in the first part, though the trio brings a softer mood. The wood-wind is a little dull here. I like the spirit of the playing very much, otherwise.

The last movement starts too sedately. I want to feel restlessness and anxiety in this. "A wild merriment, that seeks to drown sorrow," says Jahn. I don't feel merriment—only a going to and fro in the mind, with searching of the spirit. The strings are rather muddly in the usual place—the bass runs at bar 49. I do not feel sufficient contrast between the subjects in the performance of this movement. It chiefly suffers, I feel, from the slow pace. Surface noise is a little noticeable in the records. Vocalion has also done this work, but we still lack a performance that shall do it perfect justice. The breaks are, in the first movement, at bar 166; in the second, at bar 52. The fifth side contains the Minuet and the first 70 bars of the Finale.

The Parlophone *Till* is a little too much the serious criminal, and not quite sufficiently the whimsical rogue, for my taste. The players are meticulous, and so a good many points of instrumental interplay come home, but the broad effect is not quite satisfactory. The power of the climaxes is scarcely strong enough, and the wood-wind seems rather pale. Mass and weight must be expected, if the large force of players is to get home certain of the dramatic points. I have before suggested that this is where the gramophone at present is bound to fall short of the ideal. The players' and conductor's pains are well spent here, though, for they do enable us to get a clearer idea of the music than do some performances.

Mr. Scholes gave a full analysis of and guide to the work in the issue of February, 1925 (page 328). The breaks come (reading from the Eulenburg score) at page 24, bar 2, page 44, bar 6, and page 74, bar 4. There are no cuts.

Delibes wrote some of the best ballet music we have had. These fragments from *Sylvia* are most attractive. The orchestral colours are brighter than in the bigger works noticed above, but the whole band is constituted, I take it, so that everything sounds bright and crisp, as regards outlines and shades. These are never very subtle, but on the other hand, they are never vulgarly conveyed.

*Vocalion*.—Mozart, labouring to please the miserable Archbishop whom he served in Salzburg when a young man of twenty, wished also to please a kinder taskmaster—his father, and so worked away at fiddle playing. He succeeded far better than with the execrable Archbishop, for the father soon wrote to him: "If you would only do yourself justice and play with boldness, spirit, and fire you would be the first violinist in Europe." Perhaps it is just as well that, after as a child having his feet placed on the slippery path of pianoforte virtuosity, the young man did not again aim at fame as a performer. It is presumed that he wrote his six violin concertos for his own practice; or it may have been simply because he was at the moment so largely interested in the instrument that he wished to try what would be effective upon it, in this line. He practically settled the form of the modern concerto. His first movements are largely reminiscent of the old three-fold aria form, his slow movements are straightforward and song-like, and his finales rondos, invariably gay and by no means strictly constructed.

There is no mere show in these concertos, but the bravura work is an essential part of the structure, decorating without indignanting. Miss d'Aranyi is perfectly charming—strong, rhythmical, subtle, and entirely musicianly. Her tone is some of the finest I have heard recorded. The orchestra supports with understanding, and the recording is of the clearest. This is an extremely well-done work. The last side contains a striking movement from the *Haffner Serenade*, written at the same period as the concertos. It was composed for the wedding of the daughter of the kindly Sigmund Haffner. There are actually three minuets in the work, of which this is the first. Most of the other movements are very light, but this has a tang in it. Compare it with the corresponding movement in the *G minor Symphony*, with which its spirit has much in common.

Granados, in learning how to express his ideas artistically, did not allow his French training to overlay his natural mode of expression. The dance played by our British orchestra is of a languorous nature, most attractive. I find the wood-wind tone here distinctly better than last month, and congratulate the players on this very happy bit of work. It was while returning from overseeing the production of *Goyescas* in New York that the composer was drowned in the "Sussex" off Dover in 1916. The suite is a musical interpretation of some of the work of the painter Goya. This example is of the gentler kind. The playing is most suave and pleasing—rather more strongly coloured than in the

other piece; but that is largely a matter of the orchestration. The two are, in their different ways, among the best of recent recordings.

*Columbia*.—Few who know of Holst's activities as a teacher will fail to recognise in the title of his suite a tribute to St. Paul's Girls' School, Hammersmith, where he has put in many years of hard and eminently fruitful work. He had to add wind parts to the original string score, so well did the orchestra develop there. This is the string version only. He puts the jig first, instead of last, as the old suite-makers usually did. It has ancient as well as modern harmonies—modal touches and chords that forecast the Holst of *The Planets*. The "ground bass" of the *Ostinato* is above ground—in the second fiddles. A rhythmic charm is given by the enlargement of beats, that give the effect of three minimis in a bar in three-crotchet time. In the *Intermezzo* he sings delightfully—of some old, half-forgotten tale of the East, it would seem. The viola adds its thread to the violin's, and the mood of the tale changes, several times, the slow theme bringing us to an end with delicate harmonies for the string quartet alone. The Finale treats *The Dargason* tune with, in clever combination, *Greensleeves*, in quite a different rhythm. Vocalion did the *Country Song* last month. The wood-wind here is rounder and better bodied, and the simple folk-like tune sings out very sweetly and piquantly. Balance and weight in the string music are fully satisfactory.

You would not think that *Oberon* was the work of one so near his end. Weber died only a couple of months after the opera was produced at Covent Garden, in 1826. The overture was written in London. It brings in, first, Oberon's magic horn, the fairies, and (as the first theme of the quick portion), a melody from one of the opera's quartets. The horn call comes again, and the clarinet gives out the second theme, the well-known *Mermaid's Song*. The violins touch on the *Ocean, thou mighty monster!* melody. The break comes at the end of page 13 (Eulenburg). I find all satisfactory in the recording, except in the violins' swiftest and loudest work, which seems a trifle thin. The opening is extremely good, and the wood-wind is always bright and sufficiently rich. There is excellent "bite" in it all.

Linley was a pretty good sample of the eighteenth century British composer. It was a dull time, and one cannot expect marvels. There are some good tunes in *The Duenna* music, in which he collaborated with his son-in-law, Sheridan. Some of them are, quite naturally, of a Haydn-ish cast, and several are not much more than popular ditties, gay enough and good enough for such a production. Here and there is a delicately expressive air, though even that has the formal feeling of its age about it. Compare, for example, the slow air that comes an inch from the inside of the first side of this record, with any similar slow melody in *The Beggar's Opera*, and you will see which period produced the finer things. This is a record of happy tunes, though, that should be popular. The orchestra is obviously small, but it has the capability of theatre orchestras—the capacity to "get it over."

*H.M.V.*.—Still another *M. N. D. Nocturne*. It opens with the richest horn tone I have yet heard from a record. This is wonderfully full and near to the ear, so to speak, without being too loud. I do not care so much for the wood-wind and string tone, when heard at their full strength. There seems some kind of organ effect here, quite unlike anything we normally hear from the orchestra. Single wood tones are admirably given. This new recording makes one lick the lips in anticipation of what we may soon receive, if the improvement goes on.

*Aco*.—Moszkowski's Spanish is of the "lickerish" type—good enough in its way, until you have heard the real thing from Albeniz, Granados, or de Falla. Brahms' treatment of the Hungarian gypsies' tunes is, of course, the real thing—idealised, of course, but having root in the mettlesome temper and moods of the wanderers. This cheap record gives a well-balanced idea of the first of the dances. A trifle shrill in loud passages, perhaps, but quite pleasant.

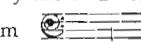
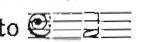
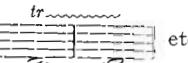
*Actuelle*.—I find these needle-cut records rather coarse. The soft string work is not fully heard. Some of the wood-wind is unusually clear and strong, but the balance is not good. The second dance is surely too slow. It loses its life and character. There is rather a lot of surface scratch.

*Brunswick*.—These additional samples of Delibes are well done. The volume of tone is particularly notable. The Massenet is a soulful item, broadly played. I should like to hear this orchestra in bigger things.

*Homochord*.—The surface noise gets in the way of this fairy music, that is competently played. It is not as light as it should be, but for the money there is quite good value. The incidental music to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was composed when Mendelssohn

"The House for Miniature Scores"

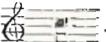
# About Miniature Scores

**Percussion Instruments.**—The *Kettle-Drums* (*Ital.* Timpani; *Ger.* Pauken; *Fr.* Timbales). These are by far the most important of all the percussion instruments. The kettle-drums are tuned by means of screws attached to the rim of the instrument. Two drums are usually employed in an orchestra and they are of different sizes. The larger one has a compass from  to  and the smaller one from  to . The present-day custom is to write *actual sounds* for these instruments, and as a rule no key-signature is given. A roll on the drum which is so often met with and which is most effective, is written  etc.

The main difference between the kettle-drums and other members of the percussion department, such as bass drum, cymbals, and triangle is that the former produce distinct notes, whereas the latter can only be used to mark the rhythm of the music and are capable of no definite note. The tympanist may frequently have occasion to tune his drums to a different pitch during the course of a movement; the composer must therefore allow him sufficient time to perform this operation before calling upon him to resume playing. Modern writers often require three drums.

*Bass Drum* (*Fr.* Grosse Caisse; *Ital.* Gran Cassa or Tamburo Grande; *Ger.* Grosse Trommel).

*Cymbals* (*Fr.* Cimbales; *Ital.* Piatti; *Ger.* Becken).—These instruments of no determinate sound are usually coupled together on one stave, the note generally used being C. One of the cymbals is as a rule attached to the bass drum and the two instruments played by one performer.

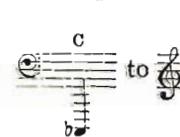
The *Triangle* is usually written for thus .

Sometimes for the sake of saving space the above instruments are written on single lines instead of on staves:—

*Bass Dr. and Cymb.*  etc., likewise with the triangle, and this method is the more readily done, as it is not necessary to write any distinct notes for them.

Mention may now be made of a few instruments rarely found in the old masters, but frequently employed by modern composers.

The *Harp*.—This instrument, for example, is not to be found in the works of Haydn or Mozart and only occurs once in Beethoven. Mendelssohn, Meyerbeer, and Gounod used it more freely and to-day it is employed in practically every modern score.

The harp has a range of six octaves and a fourth, from  and each string can be raised a semitone or a full tone by means of pedals. It is essentially a *diatonic* instrument; chromatic scales or successions of chords being either impossible or ineffective.

Generally speaking, all passages that are suitable for the piano will sound well on the harp. In the case of sudden and remote changes of key, time must be given the player to manipulate his pedals accordingly. Simple chords and arpeggios come out well on this instrument.

The *Cor Anglais* or *English Horn* (*Ital.* Corno Inglesi; *Ger.* Englisch Horn).—This particularly lovely instru-

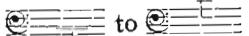
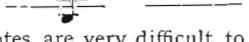
ment is really a large oboe. The fingering for the two is the same, but the pitch of the former is a perfect fifth lower. The *Cor Anglais* is a transposing instrument and is written for a fifth higher than the actual sound. Its compass is from

 giving as  to  actual notes

The lower notes of the instrument are those chiefly used. The tone resembles that of the oboe, but it is far less shrill, and it is warmer, and fuller.

The *Bass Clarinet*.—This instrument is an octave below the B flat clarinet and is generally written in that key. Its tone is remarkably rich and beautiful, and Wagner especially has used the instrument with great effect.

The *Double-Bassoon* (*Ital.* Contrafagotto).—This instrument bears the same relation to the ordinary bassoon as the double-bass does to the violoncello. Like the double-bass it is written for an octave higher than the actual sounds. The compass is about—

sounding eight notes lower. Quick  to  passages are unsuited to the double-bassoon and the lowest notes are very difficult to produce other than *forte*.

**Conclusion.**—In following a miniature score the amateur may possibly find some difference in the arrangement and order of the instruments used which has varied during different periods. Three general systems have been adopted; the first places the upper string parts at the head of the page; next comes the wind, then the brass and finally the lower string parts at the bottom of the page. The score then looks like this:—

Violins I., Violins II., Violas. Flutes, Oboes, Clarinets, Bassoons. Horns, Trumpets, Trombones, Timpani, Violoncellos and Double-Basses.

This is an old-fashioned arrangement to be found in the very early editions of the works of Mozart and Haydn, etc. The second more modern system to be found in some German music consists of placing the instruments so that the least used appear on the top, the order being from head to foot: Timpani, trumpets, trombones, horns, bassoons, clarinets, etc., with the strings all together at the bottom. This method, however, is now almost obsolete, though it has an advantage over the first system in so far as the whole group of strings is kept undivided.

The modern method is to place the instruments in their order of pitch, the wood-wind first, then the brass and percussion and finally the strings, thus:—

Flutes, Oboes, Clarinets, Bassoons. Horns, Trumpets, Trombones, Timpani. Violins I., Violins II., Violas, Cellos, Basses.

The piccolo (if used) is generally placed at the head of all; the cor anglais immediately below the oboe; the bass clarinet and double-bassoon below the clarinets and bassoons respectively and the tuba below the trombones. Other percussion instruments (if any) go below the timpani and the harp is generally put immediately above the first violins. If the above order of arranging the instruments be carefully studied and remembered, the gramophone lover will experience a great saving of time and labour, and will find his enjoyment much enhanced when following a gramophone record with the aid of a Miniature Score.

was twice the age at which he first tackled the work, the overture being written at seventeen and the rest at thirty-four. The *Scherzo* comes before the second act, in which Puck discourses of the Oberon-Titania quarrel.

The *Minuet* is straightforwardly done. I like it a trifle slower, especially in the trio. The flute is pale, there, and in the beginning the upper parts rather overpower the strings.

K. K.

## INSTRUMENTAL

### PIANOFORTE.

**LEO SIROTA.**—*Etudes Symphoniques* (Schumann). Homochord, H.B.2120, 2132, 2133 (12in., 4s. each).

**MAURICE REEVE.**—*El Puerto* (Albeniz) and *Gnomenreigen* (Liszt). Homochord, H.741 (10in., 2s. 6d.).

**GERTRUDE MELLER.**—*Grande Valse* in E (Moszkowski) and *Concert Paraphrase on Rigoletto* (Verdi-Liszt). Homochord, H.B.2027 (12in., 4s. 6d.).

**SAPELNICKOFF.**—*Fruhlingsnacht* (Schumann-Liszt) and *Grande Valse Brillante, Op. 18* (abridged) (Chopin). Vocalion, B.3120 (10in., 4s.).

**MAURICE COLE.**—*Automne* (Chaminade) and *La Source* (Leschetizky). Aco, G.15768 (10in., 2s. 6d.).

**J. HUNTER MACMILLAN:** *Scottish Folk-Songs and Dances*. Columbia, 3764, *The Skye Boat Song* and *Marquis of Huntly's Welcome*; 3765, *Flow gently, sweet Afton* and *Fairy Dance Reel*; 3766, *Annie Laurie* and *Jessie, the Flower of Dunblane*. 3s. each.

### VIOLIN.

**ADILA FACHIRI.**—*Reverie* (Debussy-Bachmann) and *Capitan Fracassa* (Castelnuovo-Tedesco). Vocalion, K.05198 (12in., 4s. 6d.).

**KREISLER.**—*Chansonnette* (George Bass) and *Entr'acte* (Kramer). H.M.V., D.A.737 (10in., 6s.).

**BORGANI.**—*Sonata* in C minor, first and second movements (Grieg). Actuelle, 15201 (11.3 in., 4s.).

**PEGGY COCHRANE.**—*Berceuse* (Järnefelt) and *Romanze* (Schumann-Kreisler). Aco, G.15769 (10in., 2s. 6d.).

**ROBERT POLLAK.**—*Romance Andalouse* (Sarasate) and *Minuet* (Mozart). Homochord, H.B.2129 (12in., 4s.).

### 'CELLO.

**HOWARD BLISS.**—*A Keltic Lament* (Foulds) and *Two Negro Spirituals—Nobody knows de trouble I've seen and Ev'ry time I feel de spirit*. Vocalion, X.9652 (10in., 3s.).

**GEORGE ROTH:** *Nocturne* in E flat (Chopin) and *Chant sans Paroles* (Tchaikovsky). Columbia, 9058, 4s. 6d.

### MISCELLANEOUS.

**ELSHUCO TRIO.**—*Perfect Day* (Jacobs-Bond) and *Songs my Mother taught me* (Dvorák). Brunswick, 10175 (10in., 4s. 6d.).

**CHERNIAVSKY TRIO:** *Valse Triste* (Sibelius) and *Slav Dance* (Dvorák). Columbia, 3737, 3s.

*Sirota.*—I am glad to hear this rich work of Schumann recorded. It is full of the fine flower of romanticism. The tune was invented by the Baron von Fricken, father of that Ernestine who caused a flutter in the young composer's heart. Of the variations he said: "I may call them pathetic, but I have to show in varied lights whatever there may be of the pathetic in them." He does not stick to his theme quite all the time. All the better, of course. The old kind of "Harmonious Blacksmith" variation was tiresome exceedingly. To Brahms and Schumann we look for the finest modern pianoforte sets, and to Elgar and Strauss for the most luxuriant orchestral writing upon a given theme. The last side contains much free matter, the theme retiring into the background. I have only known the name of Sirota previously as that of a maker of pianola rolls. I like his style here, but the reproduction of the tone is too xylophonic. It is made grey and percussive.

Some of the variations are extremely difficult to make effective on the gramophone, I gladly allow. There is a good deal of beauty in this work, that cannot fail to be enjoyed in any circumstances.

*Maurice Reeve.*—Again a somewhat percussive reproduction that, however, suits the pieces pretty well. The Liszt is touched off with excellent aplomb. The label, by the way has it "Ghomenreigen."

*Gertrude Meller.*—I like her manipulation of the valse. The piano tone is fairly good, though still dry and lacking in singing quality, as here reproduced. There are some blasts on the most powerful chords in the Liszt. This is in his most flamboyant style. Its street-piano tremolo is funny.

*Sapelnikoff.*—The transcription of the Schumann melody is not at all vandalistic. The Chopin is a little dry, but very happily kept under in tone. Its neatness and restrained exhilaration come out well.

*Maurice Cole.*—The greater part of his tone is good. The Chaminade is happily interpreted. The Leschetizky reminds one a little of the Debussy *Arabesque* in G.

*J. Hunter Macmillan.*—These tunes are arranged for the piano by the player. The lively ones, which are given with zest, come off very well. Most of the decorations are in the Sydney Smith manner and do not over-stimulate nowadays. Scots will be glad to hear the well-loved melodies in any form, however. The piano tone is, on the whole, pretty good. Odd notes sting a trifle. I like the first record best.

*Adila Fachiri.*—Highly expressive violin playing. The piano is a little too retiring. The first piece is an arrangement. The second is by an Italian composer of to-day, who has made some striking settings of Shakespeare. The captain personated here is apparently a gay, swaggering fellow, dapper and debonair. The piece wanders a little, and violin and piano are a little disjunct in harmony at times, but there is nothing aggressively "modern" in the music.

*Kreisler.*—The lightest of trifles, perfectly put forth, with as many shades of tone and delicacies of rubato as would make an excellent lesson for any fiddler. Ever so gently, but ever so firmly, we repeat our prayer for bigger things from Kreisler. We cry for bread, and he gives us cake. It is a shame to complain, but we are so often told that if the demand exists, it shall be supplied. Let us all demand, then. What about a mild petition to the recorders?

*Borgani.*—This is described on the label as a violin record, which is rather hard on the pianist. The fiddler takes the front of the stage, in this very much cut version, which has the labels (on my copy) reversed—"1st movement" instead of "2nd." The playing is not very resilient, and there are some shrieks on the highest notes in the second movement. These are somewhat thin. The rhythm is slovenly.

*Peggy Cochrane.*—This is sweeter playing, well rounded. The Järnefelt does not appear to have any national flavour. Good value in pleasant little tunes.

*Robert Pollak.*—The Sarasate piece (which, by the way, is described as "Part 1," though there appears to be no more of it recorded) is well sentimentalised. It can stand it, of course. The player's sostenuto style is admirable. The Mozart *Minuet* is that which has so often been recorded, that which begins s.f. m.s.:d.'m':r.'d.'t.r' It is a little pulled about, but not too badly.

*Howard Bliss.*—Mr. Foulds' tune is an agreeable enough thing, rather too much like a lot of folk tunes to be really original and effective. We keep thinking that it has been done better by unnamed composers in the past. The negro tunes have a wistful feeling in them, that Mr. Bliss conveys. They are never complete without the words, though. These might be given on the label or in the bulletin. The first of these two examples has quite a strong power to move the hearer to emotion.

*George Roth.*—I don't like his scoops. Sentiment, by all means, but this is to dip into the treacle-jar. Even the least bit of that—and this player is no worse than many—is distasteful. His tone is full and rich, though the use of it does not very much please me.

*Elshuco Trio.*—The melody is rather overlaid by the 'cello part. The performance is quite good, though the piano does not tell well.

*Cherniavsky Trio.*—The instruments do not blend too well. They aim at and achieve a large volume, and in music of a roughish cast they do pretty well. The Dvorák dance suits them. The other piece needs suaver tone.

K. K.

Notes and Queries, Translations, and Following the Score are held over till next month for lack of space.

## OPERATIC

**BRUNSWICK.**—30100 (12in., 6s. 6d.).—**Giuseppe Danise** (baritone) : *Panis Angelicus* (Franck) and *Pieta Signore!* (attributed to Stradella).

**BRUNSWICK.**—10174 (10in., 4s. 6d.).—**Maria Ivogün** (soprano) : *Tales from the Vienna Woods* (Strauss) and *Lo, here the gentle lark* (Bishop).

**BRUNSWICK.**—15095 (10in., 5s. 6d.).—**Giacomo Lauri-Volpi** (tenor) : *Di quella Pira* and *Ah si, ben mio* from *Trovatore* (Verdi).

**ACTUELLE.**—15202 (12in., 6s.).—**Ninon Vallin** (soprano) : *Le Nil* (Leroux) and *Ave Maria* (Gounod).

**HOMOCHORD.**—P.5002 (12in., 4s.).—**Karin Branzell** (mezzo-soprano) and **Björn Talén** (tenor) : *Softly awakes my heart* from *Samson and Delilah* (Saint-Saëns) and the duet from *Act 4 of Carmen* (Bizet).

**VOCALION.**—K.03189 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—**Frank Titterton** (tenor) : *Your tiny hand is frozen* from *La Bohème* (Puccini) and *Strange harmony of contrasts* from *La Tosca* (Puccini).

**H.M.V.**—D.A.733 (10in., 6s.).—**Jeanne Gordon** (contralto) : *Voyons que j'essaie* (Card Song) and *Près des remparts de Séville* (Séguisidile) from *Carmen* (Bizet).

**VOCALION.**—A.0245 (12in., 5s. 6d.).—**M. Murray-Davey** (bass) : *Was duft doch* from *Meistersinger* (Wagner) and *Ella giammai m'amò* from *Don Carlos* (Verdi).

**VOCALION.**—K.05197 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—**Malcolm MacEachern** (bass) : *Sperate, o figli* from *Nabucodonosor* (Verdi) and *Song of the Seraphs* (Urquhart Cawley).

**VOCALION.**—K.05196 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—**Phyllis Archibald** (contralto) : *Habañera* from *Carmen* (Bizet) and *Ah! mon fils* from *Le Prophète* (Meyerbeer).

**COLUMBIA.**—L.1665 (12in., 6s. 6d.).—**Miriam Licette** (soprano) : *They call me Mimi* from *La Bohème* (Puccini) and *Waltz Song* from *Romeo and Juliet* (Gounod). Orchestra conducted by Sir Hamilton Harty.

**PARLOPHONE.**—E.10373 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—**Fritzi Jokl** (soprano) : *Der Hölle Rache kocht in meinem Herzen* (Queen of the Night aria) from *The Magic Flute*, and *O Säume länger nicht* from *The Marriage of Figaro* (Mozart).

**PARLOPHONE.**—E.10372 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—**Emmy Heckmann-Bettendorf** (soprano) : *Elizabeth's Greeting* from *Tannhäuser* (Wagner), and **Max Hirzel** (tenor) : *Lohengrin's Farewell* (Wagner).

**Giuseppe Danise.**—Neither of the songs recorded by this excellent baritone comes strictly within the domain of operatic music. He brings to them, however, the style and experience of an operatic singer, and both are really essential to serious "Church" airs like *Pieta, Signore!* and the *Panis Angelicus* of Franck. Signor Danise brings to Stradella's prayer a broad tone, a religious spirit, and the full measure of urgency that it demands. In the other piece he sings with great suavity of tone and phrasing against a rather assertive violin obbligato, but is tempted at times to attack with excessive energy. His chief weakness, though, is a tendency to frequent *rubatos*, especially in the even quaver passages of the *Pieta*.

**Maria Ivogün.**—The charming soprano who dazzled Covent Garden with her brilliant vocalisation in 1924 is heard, like most of her *genus*, to good advantage on the gramophone. I am glad, therefore, to recommend her records even though, as in the above instance, it is the singer alone who is operatic. For an old-fashioned Strauss waltz such as this she has the true Viennese touch, and I can imagine that the delight of the immortal Johann would have been as great as my own at listening not only to the wonderful lilt, but the sweeping grace and entrain of Maria Ivogün's warbling of the tune, and the clever vocal decorations with which she has ornamented it. In *Lo! here the gentle lark* she is very nearly as bird-like and fascinating; but not quite.

**Giacomo Lauri-Volpi.**—These well-worn airs from *Il Trovatore* will be welcome to lovers of the opera, who somehow never tire of comparing the different *tenori robusti* that attempt them. It is a pity—as I thought when I heard him at Covent Garden last season—that Signor Lauri-Volpi does not seek more for sweetness and less for strident tone; also for steadiness and charm and a pure *sostenuto*. For he has a fine voice and plenty of power, as his *Di quella pira* amply demonstrates. The *Ah si, ben mio* is susceptible of much greater refinement alike as to vocal treatment and diction.

**Ninon Vallin.**—These are vocal pieces by operatic composers, both sung with orchestra and violin obbligato. I prefer the singer's head register to her medium, which is rather nasal and tremulous,

due to faulty production. Otherwise her voice is of agreeable quality and she is obviously an intelligent artist. *Le Nil* is a beautiful song, worthy of the pen which wrote that clever opera *Le Chemineau*, which Sir Thomas Beecham produced in London some years ago. In the more familiar *Ave Maria* the soloist is not quite so successful. Her style is not broad enough; she "scoops" up too many notes; and all the more acute vowels are made unpleasantly prominent.

**Karin Branzell** and **Björn Talén**.—Two earnest and capable Scandinavian artists, mezzo-soprano and tenor, who sing these duet selections with as much spirit and realism as if they were enacting the characters to the appreciative crowds that throng the opera-houses at Stockholm and Copenhagen. Both have good voices; the pity is that they do not mingle so well as they might, which is a fault of timbre, not of singing. It is pleasant, however, to hear *Softly awakes* with the ending that Saint-Saëns wrote and a good B flat from the Samson instead of a scrape from the substituted violin. In the *Carmen*, too, one feels the atmosphere of the drama just prior to the fatal deed, where the tone of the Don José, if spasmodic and somewhat forced, is at least energetic and appropriate. But why such roughness in the orchestra?

**Frank Titterton.**—The excerpt from *La Bohème* is taken too fast and lacks both tenderness and contrast. Again, in the passage from the first act of the *Tosca* this singer gives us one timbre, one colour, one jerking method of delivering his phrases throughout. If he used his voice with a less unsparring breath-pressure it would not vibrate so much or sound forced; moreover, the *legato* would be smoother. It is worth while to tell Mr. Titterton these things, for he has a nice pure tenor voice and can sing artistically when he takes sufficient care.

**Jeanne Gordon.**—This singer has the true "mezzo" quality for Carmen and sings her music as though to the manner born. The rhythm, style, and diction are just right. But for her inequalities of scale and vowel tone, especially in the *Card Song*, there would be little room here for adverse criticism.

**M. Murray-Davey.**—I like the calm, sedate opening of Hans Sach's first monologue, the steady *sostenuto*, and the genial sentiment. The consonants might be more distinct, and the final "en" of the German betrays an English tongue, but on the whole the record is a creditable piece of work, with smooth orchestration. In the air from *Don Carlos* Mr. Murray-Davey declaims his Italian even better than his German and gives a good traditional rendering, though his ebullitions of feeling are a trifle spasmodic. One thing, he has the voice and the manner of the typical *basso cantante*.

**Malcolm MacEachern.**—In this Antipodean singer the voice is superior to the style, or, rather, the latter is generally sacrificed to the former, while the diction is too often at the mercy of an unmistakeable dialect. On the other hand, those who admire a huge bass tone and a wonderful low C to end up with will like the early Verdi, even though their opinions may differ concerning the *Song of the Seraphs*, which to my ears sounds more demoniacal than seraphic.

**Phyllis Archibald.**—Here, again, we have to contend with a pronounced "overseas" dialect. And what a pity that such a superb contralto organ should not have the advantage of a more refined method. In *Ah! mon fils* one finds the singer making all the customary "points," but wholly oblivious to the impurity of her French vowels and the inequalities of the tone wherein they emerge. There is no real charm, either in this or the jerky, shaky *Habañera* (American translation) which fills the other side of the disc, and I hope the day will come when Miss Archibald will make much better records.

**Miriam Licette.**—Both her latest efforts denote the experienced gramophone artist, and both are familiar as well as popular. The waltz-air from *Romeo* has the merit of steady tone, accurate text, and a bright, joyous, rhythmical reading. The Mimi autobiography ("I'm always called Mimi," she truly says) sounds clear, ingenuous, and well recorded.

**Fritzi Jokl.**—I honestly dislike *Deh, vieni* in German, particularly when sung *minus* a single *appoggiatura* and *plus* that top B flat which isn't Mozart. It isn't Bach either, though *O säume länger nicht*, as here given, has both the title and the ring of a church cantata. Miss Jokl is heard to infinitely greater advantage in the Queen of Night's second aria, which she transposes down a half or even a whole tone. Her notes *in alt* are very pretty and neat.

**Max Hirzel and Emmy Bettendorf.**—On a single 12-inch disc *Lohengrin's Farewell* and *Elizabeth's Greeting*, which is tolerably good measure. But, alas, only a routine performance. The tenor is throaty, and the soprano has no good head notes, just missing the strong G necessary for the excerpt from *Tannhäuser*.

HERMAN KLEIN.

## SONG RECORDS

**COLUMBIA.**—J. Dale Smith (baritone): *Now Phœbus sinketh in the West* (Arne, arr. Moffat) and *The Jolly Tinker* (seventeenth century, arr. Newton). 3771 (10in., 3s.).

Dora Labbette (soprano): *Come unto these yellow sands* (Nicholls) and *Red, red rose* (Cottenet). D.1528 (10in., 4s. 6d.).

Harold Williams (baritone) with orchestra: *On the banks of Allan Water* (traditional) and *The bonnie, bonnie banks o' Loch Lomond* (traditional). 3767 (10in., 3s.).

Dame Clara Butt (contralto): *An idle poet* (Cowen), with orchestra, and *For a dream's sake* (Cowen), with 'cello obbligato by W. H. Squire. X.325 (10in., 6s.).

Elsa Stralia (soprano) with orchestra: *Love sends a little gift of roses* (Openshaw) and *West of the Great Divide* (Ball). X.319 (10in., 6s.).

William Heseltine (tenor), with orchestra: *Throb of the passionate day* (Lohr) and *The city of rest* (Francis Lloyd). 3770 (10in., 3s.).

**VOCALION.**—John Coates (tenor) (Piano, Berkeley Mason): *Eleanore* (Coleridge-Taylor) and *Come into the garden, Maud* (Balfe). A.0246 (12in., 5s. 6d.).

Paula St. Clair (contralto): *Faithfu' Johnnie* (arr. Beethoven) and *Leezie Lindsay* (arr. Cover). X.9650 (10in., 3s.).

Morlais Morgan (baritone): *Like ships that pass* (Arptherp) and *The Deep Sea Roads* (D. J. Evans). X.9649 (10in., 3s.).

**HIS MASTER'S VOICE.**—Florence Austral (soprano), with orchestra: *From mighty kings* (Handel's *Judas Maccabæus*) and *Hear ye, Israel* (Mendelssohn's *Elijah*). D.1032 (12in., 6s. 6d.).

Paul Robeson (baritone) and L. Brown (tenor): *Were you there?* and *Bye and bye* (Negro Spirituals, arr. H. T. Burleigh). B.2126 (10in., 3s.).

Tito Schipa (tenor): *La Farfalletta* and *La Givonnetta* (trad. Italian), and *O sole mio* (di Capua). D.A.729 (10in., 6s.).

**HOMOCHORD.**—Emmy Bettendorf (soprano), with orchestra: *Solveig's Song* (Grieg's *Peer Gynt*) and *Maria Wiegelnlied* (Reger). P.5006 (12in., 4s. 6d.).

**BELTONA.**—Harry Brindle (bass): *Now sleeps the crimson petal* (Quilter) and *The Pride of Tipperary* (Lochhead). 6003 (10in., 3s.).

Fred Sutcliffe (baritone): *St. Nicholas-at-Wade* (K. Russell) and *Sincerity* (Clarke). 6006 (10in., 3s.).

Herbert Teale (tenor): *For you alone* (Geehl) and *Believe it true* (Coote). 6004 (10in., 3s.).

**PARLOPHONE.**—Irmler Madrigal Choir: *Lullaby* (Mozart) and *Komm, Süsser Tod* (Bach). E.10374 (12in., 4s. 6d.).

One of the best song records of the month, certainly the most interesting to me, is the first record made by *Dale Smith*. This Lancashire baritone is, so far, known in the south chiefly through broadcasting. His singing of two old English songs is here well reproduced. This is a good example of his wonderful diction; but there is occasionally just a suspicion of flurry, and, moreover, his interpretative powers and the many different colours in his voice will have full scope only when he gives us something more inherently subtle.

Nicholls' setting of *Come unto these yellow sands* is most interesting. It is an imaginative song, sung with imagination by *Dora Labbette*; one might, perhaps, come to value it very highly indeed. But the Burns lyric, *Red, red rose* strikes me as merely perverse—anyhow, it is emphatically a man's song.

*Harold Williams* sings the old Scottish songs efficiently, with little variation. The orchestral accompaniment is effective—perhaps a little sentimental. Of Dame *Clara Butt's* two Cowen songs, *An idle poet* is very taking, with its excellently-recorded

orchestral accompaniment; whilst, on the other side, Squire's 'cello obbligato is well suited to, and highly effective in *For a dream's sake*, which, however, seems to me a very inferior song. Words are by no means always clear, and there is some tendency to jar. The four old drawing-room favourites sung with orchestra, two by *Elsa Stralia* and two by *William Heseltine*, can be recommended as records, though not without some faults in diction and intonation. And Heseltine must beware of wobbling.

After playing *John Coates's* record of *Eleanore*, my first thought was: Where is now your cold-blooded Englishman? The flood of tone poured out on the last note of each verse (held two bars extra every time!) is overwhelming. There is here no long phrasing, but that shows all the subtler instinct—even if the whole song were not written in short, breathless phrases. *John Coates* alters the end completely, going up to a ringing A. But you are carried away by it—and feel sure that the composer would have been, too. Surely Balfe's song is a come-down, even sung by Coates! But many people have a tender old friendship with the song, and will welcome a first-rate record of it. It seems best with a soft-toned needle.

*Paula St. Clair* makes the two typical Scottish folk-songs interesting; the desired freedom might still, I think, be preserved even if rhythm received a little more care. The tone is very full, but not harsh. *Morlais Morgan* sings and records two nautical songs effectively.

*Florence Austral's* *From Mighty Kings* (Handel's *Judas Maccabæus*) and *Hear ye, Israel* (Mendelssohn's *Elijah*) is one of the finest recordings that I know. Wonderful clarity is combined with almost perfect balance, and full tone (all this applies to both singer and orchestra), which is, however, inclined to be too brilliant. The vocal tone is remarkably truly recorded. In the accompaniment, American organ tone predominates. The strings are reedy. But, at the least, the whole reproduction is far above the average. Austral's diction is not perfect. Her tone is poured out richly, and vowel values, and, to some extent, consonants, are allowed to suffer. If any music can carry one above the words, it is this; but no extenuation can be admitted for obscurity in the recitative. The Handel aria includes the preceding recitative and gives us no middle section or repeat, which seems a perverse procedure. *Hear ye, Israel* has a big cut in the last section—not very serious, but rather upsetting the balance of the aria.

*Paul Robeson* and, with him in *Bye and bye (I'm goin' to lay down dis weary load)* L. Brown, have, I think, sung and recorded two of the most beautiful of the negro spirituals ideally. The reproduction of Robeson's glorious rich, round voice is superb. But, indeed, when one thinks of Brown, it is obviously captious to discriminate. I do not like Burleigh's treatment of the spirituals, but it is not aggressive, except, unfortunately, at the end of *Bye and bye*. *Schipa's* two old Italian songs are delightful. *O sole mio* (which is thrown in) is deafening.

This first *Homochord* record suggests that great things may be expected. The surface seems a little rough. The performance is, on the whole, musicianly. Occasional raggedness is, I think, the fault of the singer, whose rhythm is weak here, and who is also inclined to "scoop." The orchestral accompaniment is very fair, and shows care; but, as far as one can tell, the accompaniment to *Solveig's Song* is something between Greig's original accompaniment to the song, and his orchestral arrangement. Only one verse is given. The Reger song has a certain beauty, especially in orchestral colouring, which comes off well.

*Harry Brindle's* singing of Quilter's song seems to me to stick badly, but if you like his interpretation of it, everything else is excellent. This applies also to the other side of the record. The songs recorded by *Fred Sutcliffe* and *Herbert Teale* are well known to everyone. Performance and reproduction are excellent, except for a little bad piano tone, and some harshness in Teale's record.

This month's two choral records are sharply contrasted. The *Gresham Singers*' record well-nigh perfectly, but they offer us stuff which surely is threadbare. *Piccaninny Lullaby* seems to me more of an inane imitation than ever, when I have just played the beautiful negro spiritual record. The *Irmler Madrigal Choir* give us another Mozart; but they also sing a Bach piece—a stage nearer the madrigals which their name tells us they should sing. And their recording of the Bach suggests that they would certainly not excel, perhaps not equal, our English Singers in madrigals. Not only do they fail to overcome completely difficulties of recording this more polyphonic music. They also treat this too much as they treat Mozart and Schubert. Bach sounds like Schubert in a Bach vein. But we may still continue to look forward to their next record.

C. M. C.

## DANCE NOTES

By Richard Herbert

UNTIL this month, when writing about the tango, I have always experienced that peculiar kind of pleasure which only comes from doing something which one thinks one ought not to do. I have felt guilty at occupying so much of my space with what has concerned so very few records. That particular kind of happiness, about the tango at any rate, it appears I have now experienced for the last time; for not only have I now at least thirteen tunes to justify my discursiveness, but I have the particular requests of correspondents who have asked for lists of the best tango records. That should be sufficient excuse, but there is also the additional fact that the tango is proclaimed to be "all the rage" just now; one person writes to the press to say that jazz is dead and another that he attended its funeral long ago and has since nursed "symphonic syncopation," a lesser monster than its forbear, though with hardly a less fearsome name. Well, let them have their bone and pick it to their heart's content while it is yet fresh. But the truth of the matter is not that the fox-trot has lost popularity, but that the tango has gained what it so long deserved. As proof of this one can point to the innumerable articles that have appeared in the daily press and to the fact that the tango has been demonstrated at the Empress Rooms and "Chez Henri," and that the manager of the Savoy Hotel has thought it worth while to employ a special tango band—Varaldi's, from Deauville. I think I am correct in saying that this band consists of piano, banjo, guitar, symphonica, bandoleon, and the other special etceteras such as a saw which is held between the knees and struck with a small hammer. This latter instrument, if one can call it one, is very easily recognisable in the H.M.V. records issued this month. It is the irresistible French tango which has invaded our ballrooms and for which I prophesy such great popularity. Dancers would be well advised to fight shy of tangos played by the much maligned "jazz" bands and to concentrate on the real thing. The tunes are singularly free from vulgarity and the insidious effect of their rhythms, on me at least, is so great as to be mysteriously frightening. Furthermore, the level of performance of the bands that are being recorded is unusually high, and one can hardly go wrong in choosing any of the new records from the November lists.

One notices with interest that the gramophone companies have confidence that the sales of the new tango records will not cut into the sale of their other dance music, that is if one can judge from the fact that the issues of the latter have actually again increased in number and that is without including Beltonas in the sum, for they have not been sent for review. There are 114 fox-trot tunes, 23 waltzes, 13 tangos, one blues labelled as such, and one one-step. The Charlestons I have not attempted to keep entirely separate, because the rhythm is sometimes only occasionally introduced, and for that matter I have always thought it better to regard the Charleston as belonging essentially to the fox-trot class. Many of us used to dance steps in crowded ballrooms, very similar to those which are now being taught, and there is no reason why we should worry ourselves by thinking that there is another entirely new dance to learn from the beginning.

This month I have to welcome two new makes of record—the Homochord and the Actuelle. The latter are made by Pathé Frères, for use with steel needles, and the former by the British Phonograph Co. H.820, *In a little love boat* and *When you do what you do*, played by Roy Henderson's Dance Orchestra, is a good example of the Homochord, and the best of the Actuelles, which I have received, is 10917, listed below.

When asked to make a list of the best tangos I was at first a little perplexed on account of the fewness of those which have been issued this year and the small knowledge I had of those issued earlier; but when I discovered that there were six whole records devoted to the tango this month, and on playing them over found them to be really first class, I realised that it would hardly be necessary to hunt up old tunes. I gave a full description of *Le Tango du Rêve* (Moschetto and his Orchestra, Voc. X.9613) last month; *El Estandarte* and *La Gringuita* (Manuel Pizarro Orchestra and Tano Genaro Orchestra, Col. 3582) was issued several months ago; and *Pelota* (the London Band, Voc. X.9532) earlier still. I mention the latter because it filled a gap at a time when I positively prayed for tangos, but it is not played by a real tango band. That was the sum total of the earlier crop. We now have two records of *El Panuelito*, the first played by Marek Weber and his famous orchestra and partnered by *La Monteria* (Parlo. E.10369, 12in.), and the second by Varaldi's Tango Band, together

with *Hasta la Ruelta* (H.M.V. \*B.2136). It is an enchanting tune and both versions are very good; the bands, however, are quite differently constituted. *Hasta la Ruelta* possesses the most subtle variations of rhythm. There are two other H.M.V. records devoted to this dance. *Julian* positively takes one out of oneself; *Sentimiento Gaucho*, however, is even better, being the tango which won the first prize in competition at the Teatro Grand Splendid in Buenos Aires (H.M.V. \*B.2135). The other record has *Dajares de Fulza* partnered by *Madre* (H.M.V. \*B.2137). The first is notable for its marvellously clear definition, each and every instrument being easily identified and the piano being especially good, and the second for its excellent vocal accompaniment. These tunes set my veins a-tingle and remind me of my Latin blood. Hail to Varaldi's band, which played all four. The tunes on the two Columbia records are rather differently played; the bands use subtler rhythms, forgetting that they are playing for English ears as yet rather strange to the tango—but perhaps the records are even more worth having for that. *La Preciosa* and *El Rey del Cabaret* are played by the Tano Genaro Orchestre of Paris (Col. 3775); *Una noche en el Garron*, by the Manuel Pizarro Orchestre of Paris, and *Mi Perdicion*, by the Tano Genaro (Col. 3776). The third, perhaps, is the best on account of its subtle variations of tone and perfect phrasing; but each of the others has its own fascination, *El Rey del Cabaret* being specially fine, and *Mi Perdicion* having a vocal chorus sung with real artistry and giving one the feeling that it is integral to the tune. That is feast enough for the moment!

Of the waltz records there is one that is supremely good (Parlo. E.10370, 12in.) *Pola Negri* and *Good Night*, played by Marek Weber and his Famous Orchestra. In listening to the first tune one can almost watch the nod of the conductor as he varies the time and marshals his instruments. It is a gem of orchestration, but why the bells? *Good Night* captivates by its quiet tones and subtle rhythms. *Columbia* 9056, 12in.—*Moonlight on the Alster* and *On the beautiful Green Narenta*—falls little below the last, and that is saying a very great deal. In this particular instance familiarity has not bred contempt, for I think the Geiger Viennese Dance Orchestra plays better than ever. Jack Hylton gives us a waltz from "Poor Little Billie," which we shall play many times—*Land of dreams come true* and *Some other day some other girl* (fox-trot), beautifully played (H.M.V. \*B.2123), and another, *You forget to remember*, which is the best rendering of the tune that I have heard so far, as is the fox-trot on the other side, *Mercenary Mary* (H.M.V. \*B.2118). In addition I should mention *Memories of a Rose* and *Midnight Waltz* (Brunswick 2853), played by Carl Fenton's Orchestra, the first with restraint and an intriguing accompaniment, the second with a vocal chorus, which I do not much like; and *You told me you loved me* and *Where is that girl who was stolen from me* (fox-trot), which has a vocal refrain which is well sung and which I do like (Aco. G.15778, played by Jeffries and his Rialto Orchestra).

The fox-trots are notable for having among them several tunes from "Mercenary Mary," which has at last come to town and opened with the success which was expected for it. The tunes fall below my expectations, because there is not enough individuality about them as a whole. The best in my opinion is *Honey I'm in love with you*. For this reason I consider Aco. 15777, played by Jeffries to be well worth buying as it has *Mercenary Mary* on the reverse side. *Tie a string around your finger* and *I'm a little bit fonder of you*, played by Percival Mackey's Band, fill Col. \*3761; *Dipping in the Moonlight* is on both Col. \*3762 and Parlo. 5432, in the first case played by Percival Mackey's Band, together with *I am thinking of you*, and in the second by the Marlborough Dance Orchestra, together with *I'm a little bit fonder of you*, played in real blues time. Of the other fox-trots quite the best record is *Sleeping Beauty's Wedding* and *Montmartre Rose*, played by the Ambassadors (Voc. 9644). *Stamboul*, by Jack Hylton, is equal to either of the latter tunes, but it is a little poorly partnered by *Chick, Chick, Chicken* (H.M.V. \*B.2121). *River Boat Shuffle* and *Swanee Butterfly* complete the list. The Isham Jones Orchestra, which plays the two tunes, nobly upholds the Brunswick tradition (2854).

Of the fox-trot variations the *blues* is represented by *Gettin' bold* and *Play me slow*—a conglomeration of amazing menagerie noises (Mound City Blue Blowers, Brunswick 2849); *Foot loose* and *Sonya* (fox-trot) (Paul Whiteman and his Orchestra, H.M.V. \*B.2112), and *Those Panama Mamas* (Six Black Diamonds, Imperial 1490). The *one-step* has one side only to its account—*Savoy Southern Memories* (the Carlton Hotel Dance Orchestra, Zono. 2617). Of the more obvious Charleston records I have chosen the following: *I'm gonna Charleston, back to Charleston* (Coon Sanders Original Night Hawk Orchestra) H.M.V. \*B.2122;

Give us the *Charleston* (the Denza Dance Band, Col. \*3756); and *Charleston baby of mine* (Denza Dance Band), Col. \*3673.

**N.B.**—The names of the best records are all given above in the course of the article and are printed in heavy type; second best in *italics*. All are 10in. records unless mention is made to the contrary, and their respective prices are to be found detailed below. In this list an attempt is made to indicate comparative merit by means of heavy type and asterisks, as there is not sufficient space to mention each record in detail. An asterisk against a *serial number* either in the text or in this list indicates the latest improvements in recording which give greatly increased volume of sound with complete freedom from blasting. All are fox-trots unless otherwise mentioned.

#### VOCALION (10in., 3s.).

X.9645.—\*\**When eyes of blue are fooling you* (Ben Bernie and his Hotel Roosevelt Orchestra) and \**Lollypop* (the Tuxedo Orchestra). Very clear piano accompaniment and rhythm.  
 X.9646.—\*\**June brought the roses* and \*\**Only a weaver of dreams* (the Miami Marimba Band) (both waltzes).  
 X.9647.—\*\**Desert Isle* and \*\**I'm tired of everything but you* (Ben Selvin and his Orchestra).

#### ACTUELLE (10in., needle-cut, 2s. 6d.).

10917.—\**Mercenary Mary* (the Star Syncopaters) and *Honey, I'm in love with you* (vocal) (Lanin's Arcadians).

#### HOMOCHORD (10in., 2s. 6d.).

#### ZONOPHONE (10in., 2s. 6d.).

2619.—\**Hay! Hay! Farmer Gray* and \*\**The King isn't King any more* (Max Darewski's Dance Band).  
 2621.—\*\**Everything is Hotsy Totsy now* and \*\**Maybe you will, maybe you won't* (the Romaine Dance Orchestra).

#### ACO (10in., 2s. 6d.).

G.15795.—\*\**Ah-Ha!* and *Suite 16* (the Cleveland Society Orchestra). *Ah-Ha!* has splendid go with opportunities for tricks in dancing.  
 G.15796.—\**I love you, California* (vocal) (Washington Dance Players) and \*\**All aboard for Heaven* (the Ohio Novelty Band).

#### BRUNSWICK (10in., 3s.).

2859.—\*\**Yearning* and \**Don't bring Lulu* (vocal) (Bennie Krueger's Orchestra). *Yearning* is most artistically played without any harsh tones.  
 2867.—\*\**You're near and yet so far and I had someone else before I had you* (Gene Rodemich's Orchestra). Both are good straightforward tunes played with plenty of go.  
 2903.—\*\**If you knew Susie* (vocal) and \**Ukelele Lady* (Abe Lyman's California Orchestra). The first is played with splendid verve and precision and is well balanced.

#### IMPERIAL (10in., 2s.).

1487.—\*\**Yes, Sir! That's my baby* (Lou Gold's Orchestra) and \**Mamie* (Henri Gendron's Orchestra) (both vocal). The first is played with verve and originality.  
 1489.—\**Lady of the Nile* (Imperial Dance Orchestra) and \*\**Honey I'm in love with you* (vocal) (Hollywood Dance Orchestra).

#### PARLOPHONE (10in., 2s. 6d.; 12in., 4s. 6d.).

E.5433.—\*\**Sonya* (the Red Hotters) and \*\**I miss my Swiss* (the Parlophone Syncopaters) (both vocal).  
 E.5435.—\*\**Alone at last* (the Red Hotters) and \**Row, Row, Rosie* (vocal) (the Arkansas Travellers). The first has good volume without being strident.

#### COLUMBIA (10in., 3s.; 12in., 4s. 6d.).

3602.—\*\**Moonlight and Roses* and \**Yearning* (the Hannan Dance Band).  
 3721.—\*\**Zanzibar* and \*\**Babette* (waltz) (Percival Mackey's Band). The piano parts are played with great artistry by Percival Mackey. The version of *Babette* is the best I know of the tune.  
 \*3753.—\**I miss my Swiss* and \*\**Say Arabella* (Ted Lewis and his Band).  
 \*3754.—\*\**Summer Nights* and \**If I had a girl like you* (Denza Dance Band).  
 \*3755.—\**Craving* and \*\**When eyes of blue are fooling you* (Denza Dance Band).

#### H.M.V. (10in., 3s.).

\*B.2111.—\*\**Got no time* and \**If you loved only me* (Paul Whiteman and his Orchestra). The first is a splendid tune to dance to.

\*B.2124.—\*\**Row, Row, Rosie* and \*\**I can't realise* (Savoy Orpheans). The first is the best version of the tune.

\*B.2125.—\*\**I want to see my Tennessee* and \*\**Wait'll it's Moonlight* (Savoy Orpheans). The second is the best version of the tune.

## MISCELLANEOUS RECORDS

By the luck of things I am always a month late with *Brunswick* records. In the October list are two records (2858 and 2873, 3s. each) by the *Brunswick Hour Orchestra* which are worth noting by those who like restaurant music. *Rio*, a tango, and *La Golondrina* make a pair on one, and *I'll see you in my dreams* with *When you and I were seventeen* on the other. Both are good. So is *Moschetto*, from the Savoy Hotel, on *Vocalion* X.9653 (3s.), in *Romance Bohemienne* and *Chanson de la Esmeralda*. So is the *J. H. Squire Celeste Octet* on *Columbia* 3768 (3s.) in *Whispering Flowers* and the familiar *Rose Mousse*. So, of course, is *De Groot* with the still more familiar *Petite Suite de Concert* of Coleridge-Taylor on *H.M.V.* C.1218 (4s. 6d.). So no doubt are *Marek Weber* and *Edith Lorand* in the *Parlophone* list. But their records have not come to me this month. All this music suits everyone in a particular mood. It gives the lie to that brilliant remark which I saw quoted in the *Musical Courier* the other day: "The man who put din into dinner took the rest out of restaurant." If I could only afford one out of those which I have heard I think I should choose **Brunswick 2873**.

Cadman's *At Dawning* is one of the most popular songs in America, and *Al Starita* makes as good a record of it as I have heard with his saxophone on *Columbia* 3769 (3s.). On the other side is *Le Cygne* of Saint-Saëns; and it is odd how effective this is, too, on a solo saxophone. *Nick Lucas*, whose earlier records I have mentioned, appears again on *Brunswick* 2827 (3s.) with *I've named my pillow after you* and *If I can't have you*; his light American voice with guitar accompaniment has an appeal in it, which is also in the singing of *Earl Collins* with his ukulele in *Tangoland* and *Dipping in the Moonlight* (the tune that opens the second act of *Mercenary Mary*) on *Vocalion* X.9655 (3s.). The mandola and guitar are used to accompany *Jim Miller* and *Charlie Farrell* in *Hay, Hay, Farmer Gray* and *By the light of the stars* on *H.M.V.* B.2116 (3s.), but not so effectively. Talking of guitars, what is one to say of the "steel guitar novelties" of *Frank Ferrera* on Col. 3744 and 3745 (3s. each)? The realism of the recording is uncanny, but who really enjoys even such expert playing on such an instrument? Or xylophone solos? There are several in the lists this month; and, by the way, a remarkable record of *Bow Bells* on *Homochord* S.020 (2s. 6d.).

*Bransby Williams* reappears on *Columbia* 3774 (3s.) with *The Difference* and *Not Old*, a pair of uninspired monologues which his admirers will like; *George Robey* is fairly amusing in *The Face* and sibilant in *Just the Reverse* (Col. 3773, 3s.); *Tom Clare* gives us that excellent song *The Argentines, the Portuguese and the Greeks*, and *The fine old English Gentleman* (Col. 3563, 3s.); *Ella Shields* is as racy as ever on Col. 3734 (3s.); *Gene Gerrard*, the popular comedian, makes his début on *Vocalion* X.9654 with *My Cousins* and *Blotto* (3s.), both rather fast songs which put his diction to a high test. On the whole he comes out well, but will probably do better after more experience. *Colin o' More* is far more popular with the American public than he is likely to be here; and sings rubbish this month (Voc. X.9651, 3s.).

That free lance, *Melville Gideon*, now appears on the *H.M.V.* lists; he was on *Vocalion* quite lately, and I have some good Regals of his. His *I've fallen in love with a voice* is typical of him, with *You forgot to remember* on the other side of *H.M.V.* B.2119 (3s.); a perfect record in its way, voice, accompaniment, and recording. *Love them all a little bit* and *Texas love* on *H.M.V.* B.2132 (3s.) are just not so good; but still they are *Melville Gideon*, and that's enough for most of us.

*Layton and Johnstone* have four records this month on *Columbia* 3749, 3750, 3751, and 3752 (3s. each) with eight songs all familiar to their audiences; but I give the palm to *My girl's Mother* and *Hot Miss Molly* on 3749, two rattling good songs, and to *I'll see you in my dreams* (3752).

*Brooke Johns* is as cheering as usual in *Everything is Hotsy Totsy now* and *Love 'em and leave 'em, Joe* on *H.M.V.* 2114 (3s.); he plays the banjo marvellously; and *John Henry* seems to me much better than usual—but on the usual lines—on *H.M.V.* B.2120 (3s.).

PEPPERING.

## NEW-POOR RECORDS

**Aco.**—The best Grosvenor ORCHESTRAL record for several months past is *Hungarian Dance* (Brahms). PIANOFORTE: *Automne* (Chaminade), played by Maurice Cole. VIOLIN: Peggy Cochrane plays *Berceuse*. MEZZO-SOPRANO: Virginia Perry, who always records well, sings *Alannah*. CONTRALTO: Stella Murray, the most equal and at all times entirely satisfactory contralto on the Aco catalogue, sings *John Kelly*.

**ACTUELLE.**—Grieg's *Danses Norwegiennes*, strongly dependent as it is on the pungency of the reed tone, has been well chosen for reproduction on these records; fibre needles in a romantic sound-box could not spoil it.

**BELTONA.**—VIOLIN: *Star of the East*; most plaintively sweet and exceptionally good recording. SACRED: *Lead kindly Light*, most clearly sung by Minnie Mearns. SCOTS SONG: *When the Bloom is on the Heather*. CHILDREN'S NUMBER: *Rocking-Horse Parade*. An exceptionally fine FOX-TROT, exceptionally well recorded, is *Because of you*.

**HOMOCHORD.**—PIANOFORTE: The magnificent piano recording of Mr. Sternberg is shown in the solo *Berceuse* (Balakirew), played by Gabrielle Methot, with the VIOLIN in Wieniawsky's *Legende* and *Mazurka*, played by Pollak and with the FLUTE in *Airs Varies*. Those who have reproducing combinations that show the piano tone on these records truly will be surprised at the almost uncanny fidelity of the tone of the flute and the violin.

**IMPERIAL.**—All collectors of recorded tone examples should get *My Fox-Trot Girl*, by the Harbour SAXOPHONE QUARTETTE; it is the only record I have showing fully the percussion effect of the bass saxophones.

**PARLOPHONE.**—This company is to be congratulated by those who like variety theatre fare on a new and exclusive feature. They will be producing a set of records showing the extraordinary voice and style of Sophie Tucker, who is singing at the Alhambra and the Kit-Cat Club, as accompanied on the pianoforte by her well-known American jazz pianist, *Red Hot Mamma*. Other vigorous half-crown records are ORCHESTRAL, *Oh, how I miss you*, and the P.F. FOX-TROT, *Maple-Leaf Rag*.

**REGAL.**—A beautifully played and well recorded SELECTION, *Tell me more*, by the Regal Dance Orchestra.

**VELVET FACE.**—A real high-brow number at a popular price is the *Variations for Cello and Orchestra*. Two 12in. discs at 4s. each.

**ZONOPHONE.**—PIANOFORTE: *Chopin's Funeral March*, played by Max Darewski. MILITARY BAND: *Samson and Delilah*. TENOR: *Oh, how I miss you*, sung by Browning Mumfrey.

**ULTIMATE SELECTION.**—ORCHESTRAL: *Hungarian Dance* (Aco). VIOLIN: *Star of the East* (BELTONA). PIANOFORTE: *Berceuse* (HOMO.). FLUTE: *Airs Varies* (HOMO.). POPULAR SONG: *Red-Hot Mama* (PARLO.). MILITARY BAND: *Samson and Delilah* (ZONO.). FOX-TROT: *Because of you* (BELTONA).

\* \* \*

**N.B.**—I have purposely refrained from giving catalogue information because I wish readers to get the lists containing any numbers they fancy from their dealers, and then if they do not like the pair on the record I have mentioned they may be tempted to try another record of the same series.

Everyone should remember that machines having small horns (resonators) will not respond fully to the tone of instruments having large resonators or large resonating columns of air.

H. T. B.

## BAND RECORDS

**ACO.**—G.15722 (10in., 2s. 6d.).—Band of H.M. Welsh Guards: *Les Huguenots Troop* (Meyerbeer) and *The Rainbow Division March* (D. Nirella).

**ACO.**—G.15734 (10in., 2s. 6d.).—Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society Brass Band: *British Legion March* (J. A. Greenwood) and *Silver threads among the gold* (Danks, arr. J. A. Greenwood) (cornet soloist, Mr. W. C. Crozier).

**ACTUELLE.**—15199 (size 12, 3s. 6d.).—Garde Republicaine Band: *L'Arlesienne—Prelude and Farandole* (Bizet).

**BELTONA.**—823 (10in., 2s. 6d.).—Beltona Military Band: *Invercargill March* (Lithgow) and *London Scottish March* (Haynes).

**BELTONA.**—829 (10in., 2s. 6d.).—Beltona Military Band: *In a Persian Market* (Ketelbey) and *Sutherland Orchestra: In a Monastery Garden* (Ketelbey).

**BELTONA.**—836 (10in., 2s. 6d.).—Beltona Military Band: *Handicap March* (Rosey) and *Rainbow Division March* (D. Nirella).

**BELTONA.**—837 (10in., 2s. 6d.).—Beltona Military Band: *Boston Commandery March* (Carter) and *Flag of Victory March* (von Blon).

**COLUMBIA.**—9051 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—Band of H.M. Grenadier Guards: *A la Gavotte* (H. Finck) and *Rigodon de Dardanus* (Rameau).

**H.M.V.**—B.2105 (10in., 3s.).—Band of H.M. Royal Air Force: *Spanish Dances*, Op. 12, Nos. 2 and 5 (Moszkowski).

**VOCALION.**—K.05195 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—Band of H.M. Life Guards: *Faust Selection, Parts 1 and 2* (Gounod).

**ZONOPHONE.**—A.294 (12in., 4s.).—Black Diamonds Band: *Samson and Delilah Selection, Parts 1 and 2* (Saint-Saëns).

*Les Huguenots Troop* is the late Lieut. Dan Godfrey's arrangement of Meyerbeer's music for use as a slow march in "Trooping the Colours" referred to by Mr. Klein last month. The record is good on the whole, though fortés do not come out quite as well as they might. *Rainbow Division* is an uninspiring march; playing and recording are adequate if not brilliant. *British Legion* is equally uninteresting but remarkable for the enormous volume of sound produced without a blast. *Silver threads among the gold* is a sickly piece at the best, and Mr. Crozier's playing of it rather reminds me of tea that has been sugared twice. Possibly this is not altogether his fault, as my copy is rather badly centred.

Both movements from Bizet's *L'Arlesienne Suite* are very monotonous, and the chief interest I have found in this record is endeavouring to identify the percussion instrument used in the *Furandole*. Is it a tom-tom or what? The playing of the Garde Républicaine Band is impeccable and the recording excellent, though the trombones are hardly sufficiently prominent except when playing the air.

A splendid batch of marches has been issued by the Beltona Company, of which I like *Handicap* the best. It has a real marching swing and the tone of and balance between the various instruments is so perfect that on a good machine it sounds like the band itself. In *Boston Commandery* one of the two main airs is *Onward Christian Soldiers*, played by the brass with a very fine running accompaniment on the reeds. The clarity of each and balance between the two is another model of recording. Others above the average are *London Scottish* and *Invercargill*. On consulting my wife who is a connoisseur of and quite an authority on some of Mr. Ketelbey's music, I was informed that the new record of *In a Persian Market* is one of the best that have been issued. For the sake of domestic peace I refrain from saying more than that the voices are very muffled. The Sutherland Orchestra's version of *In a Monastery Garden*, however, is not good. (This opinion is unanimous!)

*Dardanus* is one of Rameau's many operas and the *Rigodon* (which, by the way, should surely be spelt *Rigaudon*) is a very delightful and highly polished little composition. The tempo in this record sounds too slow to me, and I much prefer that of the Vocalion version which occupies the odd side of Mozart's *G minor Symphony*. *A la gavotte* is the kind of melodious trifle that no one can do better than Mr. Herman Finck, and is played with a delightfully light touch. In both these records there is a slight reverberation in places, but apart from this the recording is good.

The two *Spanish Dances* are very attractive and well suited to the delicacy of the Royal Air Force Band. No. 2 is the better known and probably the more popular, but my own preference is for No. 5, in which the necessary air of reckless abandon is very well conveyed. All the instruments come out very clearly, but the tone of the side drum is very dry. This, however, is the actual tone of the drum used and not any fault in the recording.

The *Faust Selection* is very well arranged except that the *Soldiers' Chorus* at the end is introduced rather abruptly. Whether this is caused by a "cut" or is the fault of the arranger I do not know. The *Calf of Gold* is played with magnificent attack (in spite of one little slip) but the tempo in parts of the waltz is considerably too fast for my liking. The recording throughout is uniformly good.

In the whole of the *Samson and Delilah* selection the playing is rather wooden and expressionless. This may be an advantage in *Mon cœur s'ouvre à ta voix*, preventing, as it does, the excessive sentimentality with which this song is usually invested, but in my own favourite aria, *Amour viens aider*, a little more *rubato* could have been introduced with advantage. Apart from this stiffness the playing is good. There is a rough edge here and there, but these will probably wear off when the record has been used more.

W. A. C.

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Sung by Chas. Bonheur, with Orchestral Accomp.  
Who Takes Care of the Caretaker's Daughter ? (Chick Endor).  
Sung by Geo. Berry, with Orchestra Accomp.  
Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick, Chicken (Holt, McGhee and King).  
Sung by Geo. Berry, with Orchestral Accomp.  
Mercenary Mary (from "Mercenary Mary") (Friedlander and Conrad). Sung by Robert Kinnear, with Orchestral Accomp.  
Honey, I'm in Love with You (from "Mercenary Mary") (Friedlander and Conrad).  
Sung by Robert Kinnear, with Orchestral Accomp.  
One of these Days (Felix Le Roy).  
Sung by Fred Bishop, with Piano Accomp.  
The Tale the Teardrop Told (Ellis and Le Roy).  
Sung by Eric Partington, with Piano Accomp.  
Yearning (Davis and Burke).  
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1491 San Francisco (Carlton and Condor). Fox Trot.  
Played by the Salon Crystal Orchestra.  
Where is that Girl who was Stolen from Me ? (Melcliffe, Vincent and Herbert). Fox Trot.  
Played by the Salon Crystal Orchestra.  
Save your Sorrows for To-morrow (Sylva and Sherman). Fox Trot.  
Played by Sam Lanin's Orchestra.  
Those Panama Mamas (Johnson and Bibi). Fox Trot.  
Played by Six Black Diamonds.  
Honey, I'm in Love with You (from "Mercenary Mary"). (Friedlander and Conrad). Fox Trot.  
Played by Hollywood Dance Orchestra.  
Lady of the Nile (Isham Jones). Fox Trot.  
Played by Imperial Dance Orchestra.  
Oh ! How I Miss you To-night (Davis, Burke and Fisher). Waltz.  
Played by Nathan Glantz's Orchestra.  
Cheatin' on Me (Yellen and Pollack). Fox Trot.  
Played by Moulin Rouge Orchestra.  
1487 Yes, Sir, That's My Baby (Kahn-Donaldson). Fox Trot.  
Played by Lou Gold's Orchestra (Vocal Chorus, Arthur Hall).  
Mamie (Smith-Shilkret). Fox Trot.  
Played by Henri Gendron's Orchestra (Vocal Chorus, Bud Kennedy).

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## Gramophone Societies' Reports

(Continued from p. 287.)

**THE BRIXTON GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.**—The October meeting was held on Tuesday, 6th inst., at headquarters, the New Morris Hall, Bedford Road, Clapham, S.W. Messrs. Craies and Stavridi, proprietors of the Apollo gramophone, honoured us with a demonstration of their Super IV model, together with a programme of Parlophone records. Mr. G. Webb, occupying the chair, in the temporary absence of Mr. A. H. Mackenzie our worthy president, introduced Mr. J. Selley, who expressed pleasure at being able to demonstrate before a critical yet impartial audience.

The meeting opened with a characteristic record of Marek Weber and orchestra playing a Strauss waltz, followed by *Recondite Armonia* (*Tosca*, Puccini), *A. Cortis*, two movements of Beethoven's *Sixth Symphony*, and *Das Veilchen* (Mozart), Irmler Madrigal Ladies Choir. The above were supplemented by records sent to the society by the Parlophone Company, namely: *Siegfried Idyll* (Wagner), *Ein Heldenleben* (Strauss), Opera House Orchestra; and excerpts from *Valkyrie* and *Parsifal*, sung by Melchior. Hearing these records on the Apollo confirmed a previous conviction that Strauss' Symphonic Poem, comprising five double sided records, is the most successful orchestral recording issued by Parlophone. Melchior's vigorous singing was shown to advantage, and, in favour of this latest addition to the many available *Siegfried Idylls*, can be said, that it is conducted by Siegfried Wagner.

After the usual interval for refreshment and conversation, Mr. H. Lewis presented a programme headed "Songs of All Lands," providing a galaxy of talent for our entertainment; items were contributed by Madame Hempel, Caruso, Gigli, Gogorza, and Roy Henderson, whilst others not so familiar were Donarelli, Nadejin, and Madame Matshinka.

Space does not permit me to deal with each record, but tribute must be paid to Roy Henderson's interpretation of Schubert's *The Erl King*, in contrast to this was Gogorza singing *Song of the Volga Boatmen*, a travesty to one familiar with Chaliapine's record.

At the conclusion Mr. G. Webb rose to move a vote of thanks to Messrs. Craies and Stavridi for supplying instrument and programme, which was much appreciated.

Our next meeting, November 3rd, should be particularly interesting. A member, who is also on the staff of the Columbia Company, will give an unofficial lecture on records. He hopes to be equipped with masters, matrix, and other apparatus; it is also possible that the new H.M.V. machine will be demonstrated.

Interested readers are invited to attend the next meeting. Please address enquiries to hon. secretary, J. T. Fisher, Esq., 28a, Fieldhouse Road, Balham, S.W.—S. N. COLLINS, *Reporting Secretary*.

**EALING RECORDED MUSIC SOCIETY.**—The annual meeting of the above was held on Thursday, October 1st. The secretary read the report which showed a balance of £2 12s. 6d. All the officers were re-elected with the addition of Mr. Reg. Paine as recording secretary, the committee consisting of Messrs. Jones, Redstone, Easter, Ferreira, Aylett, Sterling, Seymour, and Farr. Some new issues were listened to, the most favoured being Columbia 9051, H.M. Grenadier Guards; H.M.V., B.2107, Una Bourne (pianoforte); H.M.V., D.1018, Royal Albert Hall Orchestra; Columbia 3718, Stanley Lupino (humorous) concluded a very pleasant evening. Two new members were elected.

In November our president will give a short explanation of the composition of Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony*, with piano, supplemented by some new issues.—R. J. Paine, *Hon. Secretary*.

**EAST LONDON GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.**—The ninety-first monthly meeting of the above society was held on Saturday, September 19th, at headquarters, Langthorne Restaurant, 15, Broadway, Stratford. Following the usual custom the first hour of the programme was devoted to records issued during September. Amongst these the Columbia Company have achieved a technical triumph in the recording of 4,850 voices singing *O come, all ye faithful*. The H.M.V. Company have also issued a very fine example of recorded chorus music by the British National Opera Company Chorus. Many good Parlophone records were also demonstrated, and the Wagner lover is again specially catered for by the playing of the *Meistersinger Overture* by the Opera House Orchestra, and the wonderful singing by Bettendorf of *Elsa's Dream* from *Lohengrin*. The Edith Lorand and Marek Weber Orchestras provide for our lighter tastes by their delightful playing of *Panama* and *Lucky Hours*.

After the refreshment interval the remainder of the evening consisted of a programme made up of twenty records selected from the members. Many new records were included amongst these, and we were able to hear the famous English tenor, Piccaver, singing the *Siciliana* from *Cavalleria Rusticana* on the recently imported Polydor records. The *Ave Maria* composed by Vittoria and sung by the Sistine Vatican Choir (Parlophone record) was a beautiful example of Cathedral Choir Music. Robert Radford was very prominent in *Why do the nations* (Handel) on an H.M.V. record. *Drink to me only*, played by the Flonzaley Quartet (H.M.V. record), although played many times before at the society, was as refreshing as ever, and can be written down as probably the most enjoyed record of the evening. Particulars of the society will be sent on application to the hon. secretary, 209, Masterman Roed, East Ham, E. 6.

**THE SOUTH LONDON GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.**—The strength of talent at the September meeting lay largely with the old masters, and, whether this was intentional or no, it is certainly a sign of the times that they are coming increasingly into favour with the "man in the street." Those who recollect the old days will not need reminding what a considerable number of band records used to form the staple fare each month, and how the band of the Coldstream Guards was responsible for a great part of our musical education. Our member, Mr. Jones, who has a partiality for this class of music, showed the band in the old and the new, their latest record being an arrangement of three of William Byrd's pieces for harpsichord. Whether this is a gain may be a debatable point, as there is such a vast difference in the tone-colour. Two more items from this programme were the duet from the *Pearl Fishers*, *Del tempio al limitar*, sung by Gigli and Pacini, which will doubtless interest those who are familiar with the other two versions by Caruso and Ancona, and Clement and Journet. Also *Deh vieni non tardar*, by Pareto—one of the best versions of this aria. A vast deal of Mozart's operas remain to be recorded in a worthy manner, beside that with which we are most familiar, especially some of the concerted numbers. The classical composers formed the sole fare offered by Mr. Veal, and to hear Bach, Handel, and Beethoven at their serenest, and thence to Wagner, was without doubt a rare feast.

The two first-named constitute in themselves alone a whole world of music, and if the gramophone is to justify itself still more we must have some of their real music, instead of only peeping at the outskirts, as it were. In this programme a new (to most) name was that of Alfred Piccaver, almost a unique case of a British singer who pursues his musical career on the Continent, and who gave the *Prize Song* from *Die Meistersinger* very beautifully (Polydor record).

The outstanding feature of Mr. Legge's programme was the Marschallin's monologue from *Der Rosenkavalier*, a Parlophone record, which was of great interest, both technically and musically. Titta Ruffo was able to show himself for once subdued in *Pauvre martyr obscur* from Paladilhe's opera *Patrie*, quite a nice record, and Elizabeth Rethberg, who gave Tchaikovsky's *None but the weary heart* (Brunswick), would have gained by a piano accompaniment. In this respect this make of record is far behind any other, and should scrap the semi-band in favour of proper artistic treatment of songs, especially those of Schubert.—S. F. D. HOWARTH, *Reporting Secretary*.

**NORTH-WEST GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.**—On the second Sunday in October the season was opened with the *Prologue* from Pagliacci. All the most notable versions were heard and there ensued a lively and interesting debate on their respective merits.

Stracciari still sings with a plum in his mouth, and one wonders why Columbia saw fit to inflict yet another version on a long-suffering public. Dinh Gilly's very sincere effort is disappointing, though again we were struck with his admirable enunciation. Notwithstanding the new recording, a previous rendering by another artist still reigns supreme.

The next item was the massed choirs' record of *Adeste Fideles* with its rather startling and awe-inspiring effects, followed by *John Peel*. Columbia are to be congratulated on their original ideas, and we hope for more. The famous Pachmann "conversazione" followed, and various others. A pleasant evening was with difficulty brought to a close by putting on as a strong hint *Show me the way to go home*.

Our programme for the winter, besides adjudicating on duplicates, includes an *Ave Maria* night, Wagner's *Ring*, *Hugh the Drover*, and English folk-songs. The subscription is 10s. 6d., and new members will be very welcome.—V. W. RUSSELL FORBES, President, 74, Warwick Avenue, W. 9.

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**MANCHESTER GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.**—The annual general meeting of the society was held in the Onward Buildings, Deansgate, Manchester, on Monday, October 12th, and to the general satisfaction of members the financial report showed an encouraging increase of revenue. The proceedings were followed by a slightly curtailed but extremely enjoyable demonstration of records by Mr. F. J. Puxty, whose programme was an exceptionally varied one and, judging from the general reception of each of the items, did the utmost credit to the discrimination shown in their selection, the varying tastes of every section of the audience appearing to be thoroughly gratified—an achievement which is usually the most difficult of all problems for a demonstrator to solve successfully. Of the vocal items the greatest success was obtained by Geraldine Farrar's delightful rendering of *Connais-tu le pays (Mignon)*, the singer's voice being quite devoid of the shrillness which mars many of her solo records, while the new and unique Columbia recording of *Adeste Fideles* and *John Peel* by the Associated Glee Clubs of America with its remarkable realism in "massed" choral effects, together with a Gilbert and Sullivan item, *A rollicking band of pirates we and With cat-like tread*, from the *Pirates of Penzance*, were highly appreciated by the audience. Of the instrumental records, Chopin's *Impromptu in F sharp major*, by Pachmann, was quite the most successful, showing the very great improvement in reproduction of certain of the recent H.M.V. recordings. A very sweet viola solo, *Come, sweet death* (Bach), by Lionel Tertis, was a most interesting and much appreciated novelty. The programme closed very aptly with an exhilarating fantasia by the Savoy Orpheans on *It ain't gonna rain no mo'*, the cleverness and sly humour of its parodies meeting with unqualified applause. At the close a hearty and unanimous vote of thanks was passed to Mr. Puxty for his most enjoyable entertainment.—CECIL J. BRENNAND, Hon. Secretary and Treasurer.

**THE NORTH LONDON GRAMOPHONE AND PHONOGRAPH SOCIETY.**—By the courtesy of Messrs. Chappell we were privileged to have the first public audition of a new gramophone embodying certain hitherto unusual features in the sound-reproducing apparatus, at our meeting of Saturday, October 10th, personally demonstrated by the inventor, Mr. W. E. Clifton. This new product is intended primarily for the commercial purpose of superseding the ordinary orchestra at cinemas, dance halls and similar places. In form it is a large oblong cabinet, constructed without any attempts at decorative design, concealing a large amplifying horn about three feet long. Along the central space within the amplifier is fixed a metal cylinder, open at the end nearest the tone-arm, and closed at the end nearest the flare of the horn. The purpose of this cylinder is to provide a means to analyse and purify the sound-waves as they are projected into the horn, through their reflex passage along the cylinder, prior to their final emission thereout. Whatever one may think of the theory, our members were convinced by aural demonstration that Mr. Clifton made good all his claims on behalf of the instrument to the very letter. For purity of tone, clarity, and withal for sheer volume, the new Clifophone must be heard to be believed. A small table cabinet instrument was also very much in evidence according to its size, being provided with a similar amplifying apparatus. A very varied and excellent number of Brunswick records were played, and whether it were orchestral, vocal, piano, or other instrumental selections the Clifophone emerged triumphantly. At the interval Mr. Clifton and his friend, Mr. Mason, were kept busy replying to the eager and enthusiastic questions regarding this new departure from previous sound reproduction experiments. The limits of space preclude any reference to the many beautiful Brunswick records on the programme, but it may be said that everyone present appreciated to the full extent the musical entertainment provided by Messrs. Chappell. At the conclusion Mr. L. Ivory (hon. chairman) proposed a vote of thanks to the firm and to Mr. Clifton, which was heartily passed by all. Saturday, November 14th, H.M.V. records by Mr. Ivory, to whom all applications as to membership, etc., should be addressed at 34, Granville Road, Stroud Green.—WILLIAM J. ROBINS, Hon. Recording Secretary.

**THE SOUTH-EAST LONDON RECORDED MUSIC SOCIETY.**—Only those who have actually heard Mr. Yeomans (principal of the Education Department of the Gramophone Co., Ltd., can appreciate his lectures; he has a way with him that cannot be described in print. His subject was "Form in Music," being a simple talk on the "make-up" of music with some details as to its construction, form, grammar, etc. Not exactly a title that would lead one to expect an enjoyable musical evening. But it was, all the same, for it started off with something tasty; jam sandwich was the first

morsel served by Mr. Yeomans, and it illustrated simple ternary form. It was called *Pizzicato* from *Sylvia Ballet Music* (Delibes). The first section on the strings, "pizz" =bread; second section on wood wind=jam; strings "pizz" again=bread. There is your jam sandwich! What more interesting way can you imagine for explaining those fundaments of music. Thus could one go on with other "forms" but I have not space. Let me content myself by indicating the other examples he used.

**Rhythm:** Song of *Hugh the Drover* in connection with which Mr. Yeomans paid a high tribute to the singing of Tudor Davies.

**Rondo form:** *Rondo* from Beethoven's *Violin Concerto, Op. 61*, played by Isolde Menges, whom Mr. Yeomans considered one of the most educated and talented violinists of the day. Then to illustrate briefly other points, he used Parts 1 and 2 of Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto in G* and Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance March, No. 4*. It was really an exceptionally fine evening and everyone present will look forward to his visits next year which have been fixed as follows: February 8th, Choral Music; October 11th, Folk Song.

Prior to, and after Mr. Yeoman's entertainment a number of new issues were heard. Amongst these were an excellent recording by Parlophone of Beethoven's *Consecration of the House Overture*, some lovely singing by the Irmler Madrigal Choir, especially *Das Veilchen* (Mozart), and *Song of the Page (The Huguenots)*, by Fritzi Jokl (all Parlophones very kindly provided by the makers). Then opportunity was taken of hearing and comparing several tenors, by means of October issues—viz., Hubert Eisdell (Col.), Walter Widdop (H.M.V.), Michele Fleta (H.M.V.), and John Coates (Voc.), the evening concluding with the record by Luella Paikin of *The Mad Scene from Lucia di Lammermoor*—a record which well merited the applause so freely given.

The next meeting will be in the hands of Mr. Henry Lewis, who will deal with "French Opera," featuring *Carmen* and Massenet's *Manon*. New members from any part of London will be welcomed and by the time these notes appear it is hoped that the syllabus for 1926 will be available. Applications for same (enclosing stamp) should be made to the undersigned, 34, Chalsey Road, Brockley, S.E.4.—ERNEST BAKER, Honorary Secretary.

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